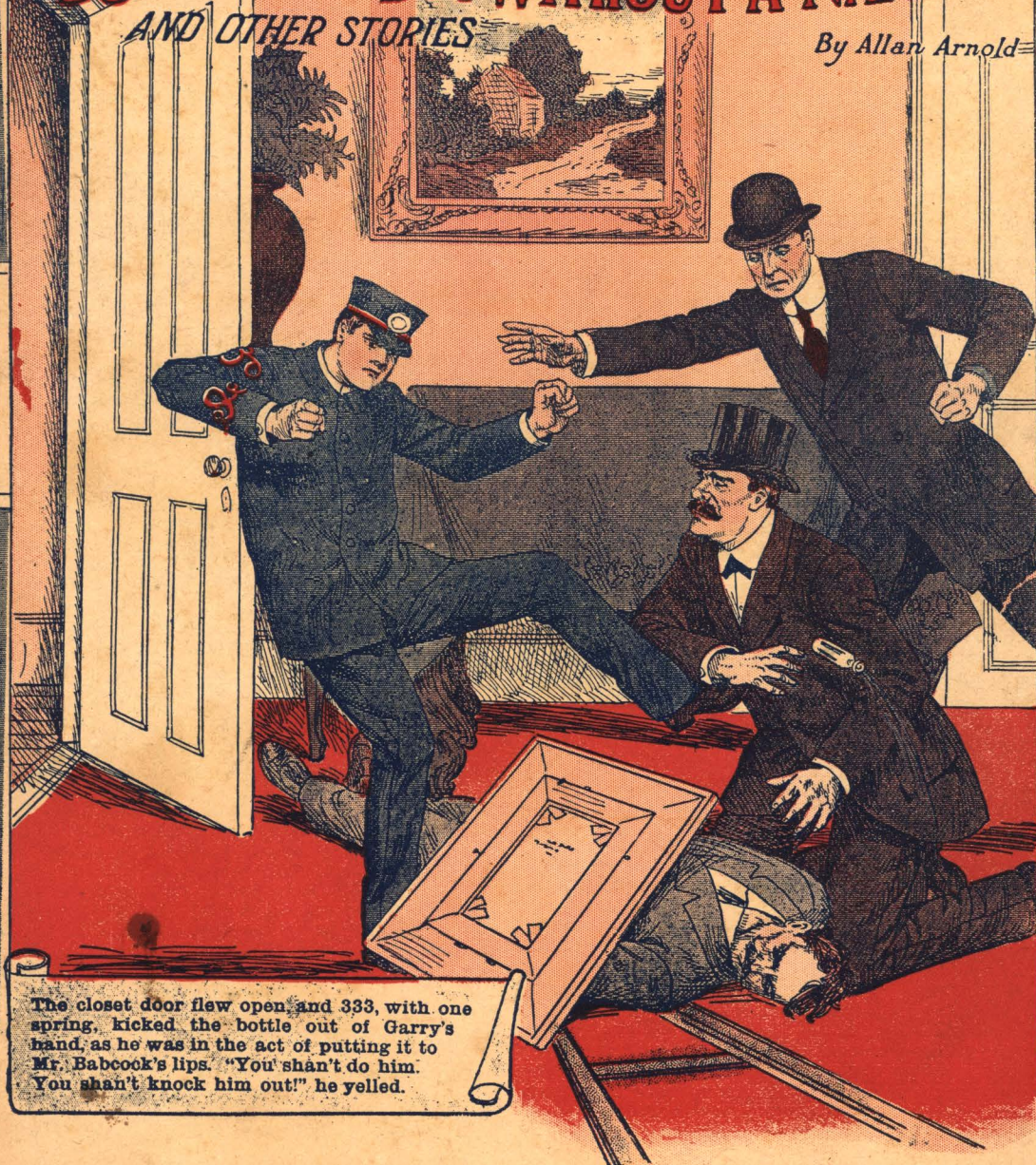


PLUCK AND LUCK

"333" OR THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME

AND OTHER STORIES

By Allan Arnold



The closet door flew open, and 333, with one spring, kicked the bottle out of Garry's hand, as he was in the act of putting it to Mr. Babcock's lips. "You shan't do him. You shan't knock him out!" he yelled.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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“333”

OR, THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME

By ALLAN ARNOLD

CHAPTER I.—The Trouble at De Lacy's.

“The brightest boy in our office,” said the manager of the District Telegraph station, in reply to the question put to him by Mr. Babcock, the well-known Wall Street banker; “why, the brightest boy in our office by long odds is No. 333.”

“Which is he?” asked Mr. Babcock, looking along the line of blue-coated boys who sat on the bench waiting for orders.

“Third from the end,” replied Mr. Wilkie, the manager.

“That black-eyed fellow with the turned up nose? He does look bright and no mistake. What's his name?”

“Ah, now you've got me,” laughed the manager. “We know him only as 333.”

“Do you mean to say that you have a boy in your employ whose name you don't know?” asked Mr. Babcock, rather severely, for he was a stockholder in the New York District Telegraph Company, and felt that he had the right to speak his mind.

“Why, yes, in this instance I have,” replied Mr. Wilkie. “The boy hasn't any name.”

“No name? Impossible!”

“He is a founding; the woman who brought him up used to call him Pat—her name was Murphy. When she was dying she told him that he was nothing to her, and as he didn't like the name Pat he dropped it when he came to work here; it was by his particular request that we call him only by his number. He certainly has a right to ask it, for the boy is actually without a name.”

“Queer,” said Mr. Babcock. “Well, I'll try him. I don't want to trust my errands to everybody, Mr. Wilkie, as I have a great many of them and some are very important. Call up 333.”

The manager did as requested.

“Well, you look like a bright young fellow,” remarked Mr. Babcock, surveying him for a moment in silence. “Is it a fact that you have no name?”

“Yes, sir,” replied the boy.

“Why don't you adopt one?”

“I intend to some day, sir. My number is good enough for me now.”

“In other words, it's none of my business.”

“I didn't say that, sir.”

“No, you didn't, but it's a fact all the same. Well, I'll not pry into your affairs, my boy. I

want a bright lad to answer my calls, and I thought I would come around and pick out one for myself. Mr. Wilkie, whenever you can, send me 333.”

This was the way 333 came to be known as the banker's boy. He liked the job first rate, for the banker was a liberal man and always gave him a tip. The other boys on the bench thought 333 had struck luck when he came to be selected as Mr. Babcock's boy.

“Say, Tree-tirty-tree, hain't you had no call yet?” asked Danny O'Neil one afternoon in October when he came in from a trip to Brooklyn and found 333 still on the bench.

“Nothing since eleven o'clock, Danny,” replied 333, with a sigh. “I'm getting tired of sitting on the bench this beautiful day. I wish the boss would send me out.”

“What's de matter wid your boss?” asked Danny, slipping a second-hand piece of chewing gum into his mouth.

“Nothing to do, I suppose. It isn't often he leaves me in all day like this.”

But 333 was not to be kept in much longer, for he had scarcely whispered these words in Danny's ear when there was a buzz at the bell board and Mr. Wilkie called out:

“333!”

The boy was up and out of the office like a shot. It was only necessary for Mr. Wilkie to say “Babcock” and off he went. He ran up New Street, turned into Exchange place and chased upstairs into Mr. Babcock's office, where he found that gentleman busy writing.

“Hello, 333!” he exclaimed. “I want you to go up to De Lacy's for me and deliver this note. They'll give you a small package, which you will take to the Fifth Avenue Hotel and wait for me in the lobby. It's something for Mrs. Babcock. She's staying up at Tuxedo and I'm going out there to-night. Came near forgetting it. She'll scalp me if I don't bring it along.”

333 took the note and was about to start away when Mr. Babcock called him back, remarking:

“Say, if I'm not there wait till I come if it takes you all night,” he said, rather roughly. Then 333 saw that the millionaire banker had been drinking. This did not surprise him, for he had seen him so many times before, nor did it trouble him much, for he knew that he might expect a big tip when he met Mr. Babcock at the

hotel, and said tip was just as likely to be a five dollar bill as a ten-cent piece.

It was getting late, being, in fact, long after business hours, and 333 lost no time in getting up to Twenty-third street, where the big department store of De Lacy & Co. was located, for he argued that Mr. Babcock would probably go direct to the hotel, and he did not want to keep him waiting there.

The note which 333 carried was addressed to the manager of the credit department, who merely glanced at it, scribbled something on a slip of paper and told 333 to take it to the lace counter, which was on the floor above.

Without waiting for the elevator the boy ran up the stairs. There were two persons ahead of him, a tall, sallow-looking man, who walked up the left hand side of the staircase, and a young girl of some eighteen years, handsomely dressed and very beautiful, 333 thought, who walked on the right. They did not seem to be together, in fact, they did not even look at each other, but both looked at 333 as he shot between them and gained the floor above. It took the messenger boy a few minutes to locate the lace counter, and when he got there he found these same people ahead of him. They stood there side by side, both apparently waiting to attract the attention of the saleslady, who was engaged in a whispered conversation with the young girl who attended the glove counter, which was the next adjoining, and paid no attention to the waiting customers. But this being the usual thing in De Lacy's, it did not surprise 333 at all.

"Can I get waited on here?" asked the young girl, rather impatiently.

"I want to see some of your Honiton lace," said the gentleman, pushing forward rudely. "I was first here and I'm in a hurry. I can't wait."

"I can only wait on one at a time," snapped the saleslady, and she took the girl's order and began to take boxes down from the shelves, while the man scowled and drew away nearer to 333.

Nothing seemed to suit the girl. Box after box of expensive laces was placed before her and their contents pulled over. The man grew still more impatient and made some further disagreeable remarks. Poor 333 could get no attention at all, so he stood back out of the way, so as to let the crowd of shoppers pass by him, watching his chance to deliver the slip and get the goods which Mr. Babcock had ordered. Now a cat may look at a king, they say, and there is no known way of preventing boys from looking at pretty girls, and it so happened that 333 looked at the girl at the lace counter and three times she turned her head and looked at him, and once 333 was sure she winked, but when she did it the fourth time it happened that the messenger boy was looking at the man. Imagine his excitement when he saw the fellow deliberately thrust a whole handful of expensive lace inside his coat, keeping his eye on the saleslady all the while.

"A shoplifter!" flashed over 333, and he looked around for a floorwalker.

He did not have to look far. There was one right behind him. He came forward with cat-like tread and brought a heavy hand down upon the shoulder of the young girl.

"Sir! What is this?" she exclaimed, springing off the stool and facing the detective, for it was no floor walker who held her in his grasp.

"Oh, that's all right," replied the man. "I'll trouble you for them laces, miss. You can't play that game in here!"

"What do you mean? Do you accuse me of stealing?" gasped the girl, turning as pale as death.

The sallow-faced man meanwhile was quietly moving away when 333 sprang in front of him and barred his progress.

"You've made a mistake," he cried, pointing at the man. "The lady didn't take the laces. There stands the thief!"

CHAPTER II.—What Sort of a House Is This?

333 had got himself into business, as he very soon found out. It was a good hour before he got away from De Lacy's with Mr. Babcock's package, and he began to think at one time that he would have to go to the station house, which idea, it is unnecessary to say, he did not relish at all.

Of course the man protested his innocence and said unpleasant things about 333. Equally, of course, the detective grabbed him, while a floor walker took charge of the girl, and they were all hurried into a private room. The girl was taken aside by a female detective and searched, nothing stolen being found on her person; but when the man was searched the laces were found in a secret pocket in the skirt of his coat, just as 333 had said would be the case. A policeman was then called; 333 was questioned sharply and his number taken.

"If you didn't belong to the District Telegraph I'd take you in, too," said the officer. "Why don't you give your name?"

But 333 thought his number was enough, and he said so again and again. The man, who gave the name of Curtis, was hurried out of the store to the station. To the girl, who gave the name "Belle Adams, 810 West Forty-third street," a polite apology was made and she was allowed to depart. She professed to be an entire stranger to the man and he denied any acquaintance with her. Nothing but 333's positive statement saved her from arrest.

"It's a good thing for that girl you were here, bub," said the detective when 333 was at last told he could go. "I'd have railroaded her sure only for you, but the boss is timid. I know blame well they work together. You can't tell me."

333 got out as quickly as possible, very much disturbed over the affair. It was now getting dark and he ran down Twenty-third street and bounced into the hotel all out of breath. Mr. Babcock was not in the lobby, but 333 soon found him drinking at the bar with two flashy dressed men, and one glance was enough to tell him that his rich patron was very much the "worse for wear."

"Hello, what's your name? Come and have a drink!" he cried, catching 333 by the collar and swinging him around against the bar. "What's this? My wife's lace? To blazes with it! I'm not going to Tuxedo to-night."

He seized the package and flung it across the room, where it knocked off the hat of a gentleman who was quietly reading a newspaper at one of the tables.

"I must get away as quick as I can," thought the messenger boy, who had been through a similar experience with Mr. Babcock twice before; but this was something easier said than done, for the banker kept a tight hold on his collar and pulled 333 up close to him every time he tried to draw away.

They were talking about stocks. One of the two men appeared anxious to buy certain stock which the banker held, but Mr. Babcock kept wandering from the subject and would not commit himself to a price. 333 soon discovered that, although the two men appeared to be drunk, they were not so at all. At last one of the men proposed to go in to supper, to which the banker assented and allowed himself to be led off. He seemed to forget all about the messenger boy then and just walked off and left him. 333 started for the door, stopping only to pick up the package of lace, which he determined to carry to his room with him, it being now too late to report at the office that night. He found it under the table and had just reached the door when a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and, turning, he saw the younger of Mr. Babcock's companions, who wore a fiery red necktie and sported a big diamond stud.

"Say, you git if you know what's good for you!" he whispered fiercely. "Don't you go hanging round here."

"I'm minding my own business, you mind yours," flashed 333, and he pulled away and hurried to the street.

He had learned long ago to keep his mouth shut and his eyes open and his ears, too. He felt very sorry for Mr. Babcock. It seemed a shame that so brilliant a man, with everything at his command to make life enjoyable, should make such a fool of himself. 333 was thinking about this when, a little after eleven o'clock that night, he crossed Herald Square on his way to his humble room on West Thirty-third street. He had been to the night school which he was attending that fall and was now on his way home. He was just passing the Greeley statue when a hand was laid upon his arm and a girl's voice said:

"I think you are the right boy. Yes, I want to speak to you."

333 turned and found himself facing a young girl richly dressed, whose face was concealed by a thick veil. But he knew the voice instantly.

"You are Miss Belle Adams," he breathed.

The girl partly drew aside the veil and showed her face.

"I thought you would know me," she said, in a low voice.

"I know you now. I knew your voice before."

"You're a smart boy, 333. I want you to do something for me. Don't stop here. We shall be noticed. Go right across the avenue. We can talk as we walk along. People will think that I have been out for the evening and that you are escorting me home."

"What do you want?" asked 333 again. He had lost all confidence in Miss Belle Adams and now believed that the detective at De Lacy's was right, but there was something about the girl that fascinated him just the same.

"What's your name?" asked Miss Adams, as soon as they had gained the partial seclusion of one of the side streets, which one it was we do not care to say.

"I haven't any name," replied our hero. "I'm only 333."

"You mean you don't want to give your name. Well, you are sharp. You are brave, too. The way you stood up for me there in De Lacy's was immense, and yet you must have known——"

"What?"

"That I was with that man."

"Curtis!" gasped Bob, overcome by this frank admission.

"Pshaw! His name is no more Curtis than mine is Adams. By my name is really Belle and you can call me so. Oh, how I want a friend! That man is my brother. I can't let him stay in the hands of the police and go to trial. It will just kill my poor mother."

"But what did he take the lace for?" asked 333, full of sympathy, for the girl had begun to cry behind her veil.

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know, I am sure. He is in trouble and needs money. He was desperate. You can save him if you will."

"I? How?"

"Can't you say that you might have been mistaken when you are called as a witness? Can't you do that for my sake, 333?"

"I might," replied our messenger, doubtfully, "but it wouldn't be true."

"What of that? To help me! Say you will."

"I—I'll think of it."

"Thank you a thousand times. Now, come in here and tell my mother that you will. I live here. She is confined to her bed and has been for a long time. It won't take you a minute, 333."

He followed Belle up the steps of a shabby old brown stone dwelling, and when she opened the door with a latch key he followed her inside. Little did the messenger boy guess what he was doing. He always flattered himself that he knew New York thoroughly, for his business had taken him everywhere, into many a Fifth avenue mansion, and many a crooked den in this same most notorious neighborhood in which he now found himself. But he believed in Belle then and later he knew that his confidence was not misplaced, and that the girl was an angel dropped down among thieves. But all this did not alter the character of the house which he had just entered one bit. It was a den of crooks of the worst description. And this was soon to be made very plain to 333.

CHAPTER III.—333 Sees a Startling Sight.

As soon as they got inside the hall Belle threw open the door of the room which had been the parlor in the days when this part of New York was occupied by respectable families. Bidding 333 follow her, she went in and turned up the gas, revealing a long room furnished with a degree of elegance which almost took the boy's breath away, and 333 had been in some pretty fine parlors, too, but none which exceeded this except as to size.

It was all very elegant and the soft light shed 333 walked over to the piano and stared at the down through the fancy colored shades of the chandelier made it look more so. 333 turned to Belle and she slipped past him to the door.

"One minute," she said, in her soft, melodious voice. "I won't keep you long." Then she went out and shut the door.

333 walked over to the piano and stared at the

pearl keys; then he walked over to a big picture which stood on the easel and was staring at that when all at once a hack came dashing up to the door and stopped. Being near the window, 333 naturally looked out. There was an electric light pole across the street which made everything in front of the house as bright as day, and to his utter amazement, the messenger boy saw Mr. Babcock, the banker, supported by the two men who had been with him in the cafe of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, stumbling up the steps, drunker than ever to all appearance.

"Great Scott! They're bringing him in here! What am I going to do now?" thought 333.

But there was no time to think about it. He heard the front door open at the same instant and Mr. Babcock calling out in a thick voice:

"Come on, boys! Let's have another drink."

"They mean to do him," flashed over the messenger boy. "This is a crooked ranch as sure as fate. I must help him if I can. That man has been too good to me to go back on him now."

But what was to be done? 333 was afraid, of course, but he had no idea of backing out and leaving the banker to his fate for all that. There was a door close beside him and he opened it. Behind the door was a closet and 333 popped in. He was not a moment too soon. The parlor door flew open and Mr. Babcock came stumbling into the room. The instant the door was closed behind him the two men let go of him and the result was painful to witness. The banker reeled sideways and struck the piano; sheering off from that he reeled in the opposite direction and ran against the easel. Down he went sprawling on the floor with the picture on top of him, while the man who wore the diamond stud sprang upon him as a cat would spring upon a mouse.

"Quick, Tom! The bottle! The bottle!" he breathed. "Blame those knockout drops—they are no good!"

"Here you are, Garry," whispered the other, handing out a small bottle, which his companion eagerly seized.

And 333, peeping through the keyhole, saw all and heard all. Who said he was afraid? What boy could do more than he did then? The closet door flew open and 333, with one spring, kicked the bottle out of Garry's hand just as he was in the act of putting it to Mr. Babcock's lips.

"You shan't do him! You shan't knock him out!" he yelled, with more pluck than discretion, and then he hauled off and gave Tom one under the chin which came mighty near knocking him out, too.

"It's that blame messenger boy!" gasped Garry, seizing 333 by the legs and tumbling him over on the floor.

"Don't hit him! Don't hit him! Dose him!" cried Tom. "Burn the little brute! How came he here?"

"Stop," whispered Garry, who had 333 by the throat now. "This is no time for nonsense. We've got too much at stake. We'll run him into the back room and attend to his case afterward," he added. "I guess I've pinched the life out of him as it is."

It was a fact that 333 was black in the face and showed every symptom of having been choked to death, but he was not dead by a good deal. The folding doors at the back of the parlor were thrown open and Garry picked up the boy, carried

him in bodily and threw him down upon a lounge.

"I guess he's a goner," he whispered, hoarsely. "How the blazes did he ever get into this house?"

"Give it up," replied Tom. "Lock the end door. Leave him here till we're through, anyhow. It won't make much difference even if he does get away. I'd rather a blame sight he'd do that than to have him die on our hands."

"Don't agree with you," growled Garry, "but we've no time to muss with him now, that's one thing sure."

The door was locked and they were gone in an instant. 333, who was only shamming, saw and heard all they did and he knew that the folding doors had been locked, too. He was on his feet in an instant.

"Oh, if I could only save him!" he thought, and he realized then that there was only one way, and that was to get out of the house and call the police.

To leave by the door was out of the question, but there was the window. Tom and Garry seemed to have forgotten that. 333 crept over to the window and softly raised the sash. It was about twelve feet down to the back yard, and this, for a smart boy like 333, was nothing at all. He swung out, held on by his hands and dropped, but after all he managed to make a botch of it, short as the distance was, for his foot turned under him and down he came on the flagstones, striking his head with a force which sent him off into unconsciousness. It was a wonder he wasn't killed. Messenger boys are a hard-headed set as a rule, it is said, and 333's head was certainly as hard as the next; a few moments passed and then he came back to his senses all at once and found himself lying on the stone. He never guessed that he had been unconscious—didn't realize it at all—but just jumped up and staggered over against the fence, wondering what he was going to do about his foot, for the pain in his ankle had become intense.

"I've sprained my ankle, anyhow, and maybe I've broken my leg," thought 333. "Confound the luck. How could I have been so clumsy? But I can't stay here. I may not be in time to save Mr. Babcock, but I'll do my best."

He staggered on through the yard and, with some difficulty, managed to climb the back fence and drop down into the yard on the other side. Now he began to realize the difficulty of his undertaking. In order to reach the street it would be necessary to pass through the house at the end of the yard or some other one of the long row which extended in both directions.

"I'd better have tried it next door, I suppose," he muttered. "If I go through here I shall have to go all the way round the block. Never mind. I'll not go back, anyhow. It might as well be this house as any other—they've got to let me through."

He had covered the length of the back yard while thus reflecting and he now paused to look up at the house which rose before him. The back windows were all dark and it looked very much as if every one had gone to bed. There were heavy iron bars at the basement windows and when 333 peered between them he found his view cut off by a drawn shade on the inside. He now tried the kitchen door softly, and as he expected, found it fastened. To the ordinary observer there would seem to be no way of getting into the house, but 333 did not see it in that light at all.

One of the parlor windows was pretty close to the fence and now that he came to look at it, the boy saw that it was drawn down from the top a little way.

"I can get through there easy enough," he thought, "and if anybody tackles me they'll see my uniform and that will help to make them believe what I say."

He climbed on the fence, and, reaching over, pushed up the bottom sash of the window and waited. All being still, he leaned over, caught the sill, pulled himself up and sprang lightly into the room. Groping his way to the door which communicated with the hall he tried the knob and, to his disgust, found it locked on the outside. There were still the folding doors, which shut off the front parlor, and he crept toward them.

"If I can only reach the front hall door I'm all right," thought 333.

It seemed to be dark in the front parlor. Not a ray of light came through crack or keyhole. The messenger boy cautiously tried the door, and, finding it unfastened, threw it back, a cry of amazement and horror escaping him as he looked into the front parlor from which the light streamed forth.

CHAPTER IV.—The End of the Babcock Affair.

A district messenger boy ought to be prepared for anything that may happen, but 333 was certainly not prepared for what he saw through those folding doors. And yet it was not a strange scene. On the contrary, 333 has seen it all before and that not ten minutes ago. This was the queerest part of it. There, stretched upon the floor, lay Mr. Babcock, the banker. The two men, Tom and Garry, were bending over him. There was the grand piano, the pictures, the elegant furnishings. All these things 333 took in at a glance, and he thought for the instant what many another had thought in that same room, that he had got back in the house in the other street that he had just left. He had no time to think of anything else. Tom sprang upon him like a tiger.

"That blamed messenger boy again!" he cried, and then 333 ran for his life and tried to jump out the back window. Tom caught him by the tail of his jacket and pulled him back, throwing him upon the floor with great violence, kicking him in the head several times. It was a wonder that poor 333 was not killed outright, and, as it was, the wits were knocked out of him. Perhaps there was nothing else that saved his life but the fact that he lay like one dead. Garry, hastily removing a bunch of papers from the inner pocket of Mr. Babcock's coat and transferring them his own, sprang to the assistance of Tom.

"It is the boy, sure enough!" he exclaimed, "but don't make such a noise about it. Is he dead?"

"I'm blessed if I know," replied Tom. "Guess he is."

Shut the window, then. We don't want the whole neighborhood to know about it."

"Got the papers, Garry?"

"You bet. I don't like this boy business, though. It's going to make trouble sure."

"Wait! How did he get in here?"

"Why, jumped out the back window and came over the fence, of course. How else?"

"I suppose so. What's to be done?"

"Don't fret. I'll fix it all right. Only give me time to think. Remember the price we pay for protection. The police are not going to turn upon us in a hurry, you bet."

Just what use they made of their opportunity 333 never knew, for when he came to himself he was lying upon the pavement in a dark alley, with his head aching fit to burst. Just then he heard a groan in the darkness close beside him and then another.

"Oh! Oh! I'm caught again!" a voice was muttering. "Isn't this disgraceful! Just to think of a man in my position! All my own fault, too, but none the better for that."

"Mr. Babcock!" flashed over the messenger boy, for he recognized the banker's voice.

He also recognized the fact that he had work to do right there in that dark alley, and he showed his pluck and energy by going about it then, badly as he felt himself.

"Mr. Babcock!" he whispered. "Oh, Mr. Babcock! Are you here?"

"Who is that?" asked the banker's voice. "333, is that you?"

"That's who it is, sir. Ah, here you are! Now, try to brace up and let me get you on your feet. Do you feel very bad?"

"Terrible! How did I come here? Do you know?"

"That I don't know any more than I know how I came here myself."

"What? Did they get you, too? I thought you went away. I don't remember seeing you after we left the hotel cafe."

"Don't say a word now," whispered the messenger boy. "I think I hear some one coming. Here, let me help you on your feet. That's the idea. Can you stand by leaning against the wall?"

"I guess so," groaned the banker. "I feel awful, though. It's all my own fault, 333."

"Hush! Some one is coming," whispered 333, for stealthy footsteps could be heard coming up the alley from the street, and two young toughs were seen coming along close to the wall.

"Hello! What's dis we run up against?" exclaimed one. "Say, a lush. Gee. What's de kid onto? Shell out, now! Shell out! You have been troo him. Give us some of it, quick!"

"Take this!" cried 333, and he sprang upon the tough and knocked him flat with one well-directed blow between the eyes.

"Gee! Is dat yer lay!" cried the other, making a rush for the boy.

But 333 was ready for him, too.

He just lowered his head and butted the tough in the stomach, as cleverly as any billygoat might have done. Then another tough went down in the alley, on his back, and with such force did he strike his head on the pavement that he did not get up again.

"This is our chance!" breathed the boy, seizing the banker's hand. "Run now! Run for your life!"

There wasn't much run in Mr. Babcock then, but he managed to get out of the alley somehow.

They found themselves in a street lined with tenement houses and factories, a hard neighborhood if ever there was one. There were very few persons on the street, and but few lights in the windows, and this told the messenger boy that the hour was late, as he clutched the banker by the arm and hurried him on toward the avenue, where he could see the electric lights.

"Brace up! Do brace up! Try!" he kept saying.

"Get a cab," was all the banker seemed to be able to say in answer, but the suggestion was a good one and 333 determined to adopt it if he could.

There was no use hoping to find a cab here on the cross street, so he managed to drag the banker to the avenue and then he discovered where he was. Eleventh avenue and Thirty-eighth street the signs at the corner read. It was the notorious "Hell's Kitchen," the toughest neighborhood in all New York. The messenger boy's heart sank within him, for Mr. Babcock grew worse and worse and reeled so that he could scarcely hold him up. If a policeman should happen to spy them now the banker's fate was sealed and his name would appear in the papers next day to a certainty.

"He'd give a hundred dollars to keep it out," thought 333. "What shall I ever do?"

At that instant he saw a cab coming rapidly down the avenue and he hailed it, for the speed with which the driver was going made him believe that it was empty, but when the man pulled up alongside the curb the door flew open and, to the messenger boy's infinite surprise, out stepped Miss Belle Adams.

"Oh, 333! Have I actually found you?" she gasped. "Get him in, quick! It's your only chance!"

"No!" cried 333, backing away. "No! I've been there before. That's a pretty trick you played me. Go on about your business and leave me alone."

CHAPTER V.—The Man With no Address.

If ever a girl drew herself up with dignity it was Belle Adams then.

"Stop, 333! You are making a great mistake and doing me a great wrong at the same time. I couldn't help what happened, but I have not forgotten that you came into that dreadful house to help me. See, here are the papers stolen from this man. Put them in your pocket. Get him home. Don't lose an instant. The driver will tell you it's all straight."

"That's what it is, bub," said the driver, looking down from his box, as Belle thrust a bundle of papers upon 333. "My orders from the lady was to take you wherever you say. I'm ready and you needn't be afraid."

"Let's go," said Mr. Babcock, straightening up all at once. "I can't walk any further. Help me in, 333. Here, give me those papers—yes, they are mine. Girl, I would reward you if I could, but I haven't a cent—hello! Where is the girl?"

Belle had glided off into the darkness. 333 saw her go, but he made no effort to stop her. The prospect of getting into the cab was too

tempting to be refused, and it proved to be a perfectly safe undertaking, for the driver landed them at the side door of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where Mr. Babcock was promptly taken in hand by the night porter, who knew him. The driver was paid by the porter and the cab dismissed. There was no number on it or 333 would have got it sure.

"The boy goes to the room with me," insisted the banker, and as he was a man who had left many tips at the hotel, no objection was made, and the boy went. Not until Mr. Babcock had undressed and crawled into bed did he try to speak.

"Give me those papers out of my pocket, 333," he then said. "That's right. Thank you. I'm not going to forget this. Wash your face now; you are all over blood. Are you much hurt, my boy?"

"Cut in the back of the head, that's all, sir."

"It's too bad. All through my folly. Did you follow me into that house?"

"Oh, no!" replied 333, and then he told this story, at the banker's request.

It was all Mr. Babcock could do to keep awake while he listened to it. Meantime he was examining the papers, which he went over, again and again.

"Take these downstairs and give them to the night clerk in my name, 333," he said at last, "and take warning by me. Boy, do you know how much I would have lost had I not got these papers back?"

"I'm sure I don't, sir," replied 333, who was most anxious to get away.

"Over a hundred thousand dollars. Think of it!" said Mr. Babcock. "So much for drinking too much whisky. I owe you something, 333, and now, before you leave me, I want you to promise, on your sacred honor, never to mention what has happened tonight to a living soul."

"What? Aren't you going for those fellows?" cried the messenger boy. "I'm sure I could find that house again."

"No; I shall do nothing. You promise?"

"Certainly, Mr. Babcock, if you wish it."

"Not a word at the office."

"Not a word."

"That's enough. I trust you and you won't regret it. Goodnight, 333."

Now, this was the somewhat tame ending of one of our messenger boy's most startling adventures. At least 333 voted it a tame ending as he hurried away from the hotel. He had reason to change his mind two days later, however.

"Babcock, 333!" cried Mr. Wilkie, as the bell sounded in the office, and the banker's number dropped on the board. When he got around to the banker's office old Mr. Bailey, the bookkeeper, told him that Mr. Babcock was on the Stock Exchange.

"He left this letter for you, 333," he added, "and he told me to say to you if you wanted to open an account with us it would be all right."

333 took the letter, puzzled at Mr. Babcock's words, until seeing that it was addressed to himself, he opened it and found, to his astonishment, a check for \$1,000, drawn to his own order, inside.

"Oh, Mr. Bailey, this must be a mistake!" he exclaimed, flushing up. "I——"

"Hold on, 333, don't talk so loud," whispered the bookkeeper. "I guess it's all right. I drew the check myself, by the governor's order. You were with him the other night, were you not?"

"I haven't anything to say about that," stammered 333, "but—"

"Hold on! Listen, my boy."

Mr. Bailey dropped his voice to a whisper.

"Better put that in the savings bank," he said.

"There's the Seaman's or the Bleeker Street, or the Bowery, all as sound as a rock. Don't you say I said so, now, or it may cost me my job."

That was the way 333 came to have a savings bank book with one thousand dollars written in to his credit. It was the last he heard of the matter for months, during which time he answered many calls for Mr. Babcock, but never an allusion was made to that memorable night. Nor did 333 ever hear anything about the shoplifting case at De Lacy's. Shortly before this all New York was startled by a big defalcation in a certain bank in Wall Street. The cashier, a trusted servant of many years' standing, had suddenly vanished and between one and two hundred thousand dollars were missing. Whether he had taken it with him or it had been lost in Wall Street speculating nobody knew.

Of course, the messenger boys discussed the matter in common with everybody else on the street. Some of them knew the cashier well.

"Wish I was that feller," said Danny O'Neil. "Gee, wouldn't I make de fedders fly wid all dat cash!"

That afternoon Danny got a call uptown and at three o'clock had not returned, so when a call came from the office of a certain noted private detective agency 333 got it, although by rights it belonged to Danny, he being the boy usually employed by these people. When 333 got to the office he was hurried into a private room, where he found Pete Nugent, the noted Wall Street detective, sitting at a desk, with his shoe off and a doctor examining his foot.

"Yes, it's a bad sprain, Mr. Nugent," said the doctor, as 333 entered. "It would be madness for you to attempt to go. It might lame you for life."

Now, to keep up the thread of our story, it would seem necessary to repeat Detective Nugent's answer, but it really can't be done, for the language was most picturesque and would not look well in print. When he got through swearing, Detective Nugent hastily scratched a few lines on a sheet of paper, sealed them in an envelope and turned to the messenger boy, who was patiently awaiting his instructions.

"Where's 88?" he asked. "Why didn't they send him here?"

Now, 88 was Danny's number, and 333 made the necessary reply.

"I'm sorry it's you and not him," said the detective. "Still, I suppose we have got to put with it. Look here, boy."

"Sir."

"I say look here!" roared the detective.

"I'm looking, sir."

"No, you hain't neither. You are looking at me and I want you to look at this."

Detective Nugent was pointing to the name on the letter, which he had just sealed.

"Mr. James Rodman, addressed," was the way it read.

"Know that man?" asked the detective.

"No, sir."

"You've been down around the Street for some time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you probably do know him by sight, and when you see him don't you dare to let on that you know him or to call him anything but Rodman—do you understand?"

"I always mind my business, sir," replied 333, quietly. "If the gent answers to the name of Rodman it isn't my place to call him anything else."

"Come, that's sensible," the detective said, handing over the letter. "Now be off with you. Show what sort of stuff you are made of and I may use you again. Remember one thing, all you have got to do is to deliver the letter. Not a word do you utter on any other subject, no matter what is said to you."

"All right, but where do I take the letter to? There's no address," said 333, badly puzzled.

"Start!" roared the detective, and 333 bounced out of the door.

It was the queerest message he had ever been entrusted with. How was he to find this man with no address?

CHAPTER VI.—Overboard.

333 was not left long in the dark. He had scarcely put foot in the hall when a pleasant-faced young man of about twenty-three or four, dressed in a cheap business suit, stepped up to him and, putting his arm on his shoulder, said:

"Don't you mind, Nugent. He has just sprained his ankle and he feels rather rocky. You are to follow me. I'll show you where this man Rodman is to be found."

"I don't know about that," said 333, drawing back. "You're a stranger to me, boss. He ought to have given me instructions. I was going to take the letter around to the office. He couldn't expect me to do a call where there's no address."

"He didn't want the doctor to see me; that was the trouble," replied the young man. "Look, here is my shield. Examine it carefully and you'll see that I belong to the office. If you don't believe that you will have to go inside and ask, but Nugent will bite your head off if you do."

333 examined the shield. It bore the name of the detective agency; there could be no doubt about its being all right.

"What am I to do?" he asked.

"Just follow me," replied the young man.

"Don't speak to me, don't look at me. Keep pretty well behind, but, of course, you won't lose sight of me. Quick, now! Are you ready? There isn't a moment to lose."

"I'm ready," said 333, promptly.

"There's one thing I ought to say, perhaps," added the detective, "and that is that you will go aboard the tug, of course. You'll be told by the captain what to do when we get to the steamer. Don't ask for me; you won't see me there."

"All right," said 333. "Go ahead."

They went down in the elevator then and the detective, keeping in advance, made a bee-line down Pine street to an East River pier and went aboard the tug Tormentor, which lay at the end of the wharf.

"Is this the boy?" called the captain, looking out of the pilot-house window when 333 jumped aboard.

"That's the boy," replied the detective, and he popped into the cabin and did not show himself again.

"Cast off that bow-line!" roared the captain, and a moment later the Tormentor was flying down the river under a full head of steam.

"They are trying to head off some fellow on a steamer," thought 333. "Well, this is a new kind of job. Wonder how it will turn out?"

He sat down upon a coil of rope and waited.

The tug ran down the bay and passed through the Narrows. It was now getting dark and was decidedly cold. 333 would have liked to go into the cabin, but he was afraid of being ordered out by the detective, so he just turned up the collar of his coat and remained where he was.

They were now drawing near Hoffman's Island, and he could see a big European steamer forging ahead. Suddenly one of the deck-hands went forward and waved a lantern, which threw a striped light, red, white and green. This seemed hardly necessary, as it was barely dusk, but 333 knew that it must be a signal, and he was not surprised when the steamer's whistle blew and he saw that they had stopped.

"Hey, you boy there! You messenger boy!" shouted the captain of the tug.

"Hello! Here I am! What's wanted?" cried 333, springing up.

"Prepare to go aboard."

"All right, sir. You'll wait for me, I suppose?"

"Of course we'll wait for you," growled the captain, and he ran up alongside the steamer, calling out something to the officer on deck, which 333 did not quite understand.

"All right!" shouted the officer. "I'll let the ladder down."

Down came the ladder over the steamer's side.

"Up with you, monkey!" said the captain. "Now is the time to deliver your letter. Fire away."

333 ran up the ladder as nimbly as if he had been what the captain called him.

"Who's wanted?" asked the officer when he landed on the deck.

"I want Mr. Rodman," replied 333, promptly.

"Take him to the purser. Find out Rodman's number and take him there," was the order given, and another officer led 333 below and later left him at a stateroom door.

The messenger boy knocked and the door was opened by an elderly man, who started back with a suppressed exclamation when he saw who his visitor was.

"Do you want me?" he gasped.

"Yes, if you are Mr. Rodman," replied 333, staring, for it struck him that he had seen this man before.

"Here's a letter for you, sir."

The gentleman seized the letter and turned deathly pale. For a moment he stood biting his lips and then said:

"Well, I'll go. Boy, help me pack up."

He tossed an empty grip to 333 and then began putting out articles of clothing and other things upon the lower berth. 333 hurried the things into the bag, while Mr. Rodman hastily put a few articles into another grip and locked it.

Just then there came a knock on the door. It

was one of the officers, with two men behind him.

"Are you going ashore, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," was the hurried answer. "Will you see my trunk aboard the tug?"

The trunk was carried up and let down upon the deck of the Tormentor. 333 carried down both grips and Mr. Rodman descended the ladder after him. Instantly the deck-hands on the tug cast off and the Tormentor began to move away.

"Where is he?" asked Mr. Rodman, turning to 333.

"Where is who?" asked the messenger boy, not forgetting Detective Nugent's caution.

"The man who wanted to see me," replied Mr. Rodman, nervously.

"I am here!" spoke a voice behind him.

There stood the detective with his arms folded.

"How are you, Mr. Mellen?" he said, dramatically. "Hope I see you well."

"Tricked!" gasped the passenger, "but you shall never take me back alive."

He made one spring for the low railing of the tug and leaped into the bay. No doubt he was a great criminal; probably his death would have been a small loss to society, but the trouble was, he ran against our hero as he made that desperate jump and knocked him overboard, too. Down went 333's head under the chilly waters of New York Bay.

CHAPTER VII.—333 and the Defaulting Cashier.

Of course, 333 was a good swimmer—there are few New York boys of his class who are not. His first thought when he came to the surface was, naturally, to get back on board the tug, but upon looking around he saw that this was not going to be so easy, for the Tormentor had suddenly turned and was steaming off in the direction of the Bay Ridge shore, and there was another tug right ahead. The captain and the detective were shouting to the people on the other tug. 333 had observed this tug close alongside of them as he and Mr. Rodman left the steamer, but he had not given it much thought until now.

"Thunder! They are going off and leaving me!" thought the boy. "I don't like this for a cent!"

The distance between him and the stern of the Tormentor was not more than twenty feet, but it was increasing every instant.

Meanwhile, the big steamer had started on its way, and it began to look very much as if 333 was going to be left in the lurch. Night was coming on and, what was worse, a fog was sweeping up the bay. It was a very serious situation indeed. 333 swam out with a bold overhand stroke, shouting with all his might, but neither the detective nor the captain paid the least attention to him. Perhaps they did not hear him, for the steamer's whistle was blowing at that time and the detective was yelling for the other tug to stop.

"We want that man! I order you to stop and deliver him up to us in the name of the law!" he shouted out.

"Go to the mischief!" yelled the captain of the other tug, and then, as the Tormentor was almost upon him, he suddenly drove his helm hard-a-port and, swinging around, crossed her bows.

"Stop, or I'll fire!" bawled the detective.

"Fire if you dare!" was the answer.

The detective drew a revolver and fired at the

pilot-house. There was a crash of glass, and then the captain leaned out of the window and discharged a revolver full at the detective's head. All this 333 saw, and then he saw the detective drop on the deck, and the other tug came up alongside of him. It would have run the boy down to a certainty if he had not been wide awake and seized one of the gaskets, holding on for dear life. He climbed up, tumbled over the rail, crawled astern and dropped down behind a big hawser, where he lay panting for breath, while the tug, whose name he now knew to be the J. S. Peters, having seen it on her stern, made one or two further erratic turns, dodging the Tormentor, and then went steaming across the bay toward the Long Island shore.

Very likely there would have been further trouble but for the fog. It struck them just in time and enveloped both tugs, and after a moment or two the Tormentor was seen no more, although her hoarse whistle could be heard close behind. Where was Mr. Rodman? 333 could only guess, for he had not seen the man since he sprang into the water, but if anybody had asked him what his guess was, he would have said, emphatically, that the man was hidden on board the Peters at that very moment. Perhaps 333 would have shown himself boldly and started to look the man up but for something which now occurred. Suddenly the door of the cabin opened and a man came out and walked astern, stopping for a moment to look back into the fog. 333 crouched lower behind the hawser. This man was none other than "Garry," the crook, whom he had run against in the mysterious house uptown, now more than a year ago. The messenger boy held his breath and watched him.

"There's crooked work whenever that man is around, that's one thing sure," he thought. "I wonder if he'd know me? I'd like to bet he would. It won't pay me to show myself now."

"Hello, Captain Jim!" cried Garry, suddenly turning and looking up.

"Hello!" came the answer from the pilot-house. "We seem to have given them the slip. They are going off in the other direction now."

"That's what's the matter. How's the old man?" "Quieted down. Who was right now? Didn't it pay us to follow the steamer?"

"I don't know whether it will pay me or not," growled the captain. "If I've killed that detective I'm in a peck of trouble. I was a blame fool to fire at him the way I did."

"Now, look here, Cap, this is a dead open-and-shut deal; a matter of dollars and cents. Stand by me to-night and I'll stand by you—see?"

"I hear," growled Captain Jim. "We'll see later on. What do you want me to do?"

"I can't tell you now. We've got to make 96th Street first."

"Hain't he told you nothing?"

"Not yet. I'll go at him again in a minute."

"Did he have the money with him? Is it with his baggage on board the other tug?"

"Not on your life! I knew that much or I shouldn't be in it. Get across now and I'll have a further talk with him presently meanwhile I'm going to hold the watch here, to see if we are being followed or not."

"Go and have your talk with him now. Trust me for that."

"I trust nobody—there's too much at stake. Attend to your wheel, that's all you've got to do."

Thus saying, Garry walked still further aft and stood smoking his cigar and looking off into the fog.

"This is my time to do something," thought 333. "I think I can size this thing up pretty well. There's a big reward to be had here and I don't know why I should not earn it as well as the detectives—if I can."

There seemed to be nobody on board the tug but Captain Jim, Garry and the engineer, except, of course, the "prisoner" alluded to, and 333 himself. When the messenger boy got to the cabin door he softly tried it, and finding it unlocked, glided in as noiselessly as a ghost.

"Hush!" he whispered, holding up his finger. "Don't say a word! I'm your friend."

There sat Mr. Rodman, a sorry-looking object, tied to a chair. As he sat there staring at the messenger boy under the swinging lantern, he looked as badly scared a man as 333 had ever seen.

"You here!" he gasped. "You!"

"Yes, sir," replied 333, meekly. "I'm here, and I'm here to help you. I know you, mister. You are Mr. Mellen, who ran away from the Twentieth National Bank."

The man started. His pale face turned paler still.

"Help me, bub!" he breathed, hoarsely. "I jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. I escaped the detectives, but I've fallen into the power of as big a scoundrel as ever walked. Boy, you are sharp. Get me off this tug and I'll give you five thousand dollars—five thousand dollars all for yourself—do you hear?"

"The reward is ten thousand," replied 333, coolly.

"You shall have it! Only get me out of this man's hands."

"Hush! He's coming!" breathed the messenger boy, for Garry's step was heard at the door.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Escape from the Tug.

333 came about as near being caught just then as ever a boy did, but he escaped the danger for the moment by dropping behind the chair in which the prisoner sat. Instantly the door opened and Garry entered. He closed the door after him and stood before Mr. Mellen—we may as well call the defaulter by his true name—with an evil smile upon his face.

"Well, it's all right," he said. "We have given the detective the slip."

"Yes?" replied the cashier, nervously.

"Yes. You don't seem to be a bit glad."

"What difference does it make to me?"

"Do you want to be arrested?"

"I might as well be as to be here in your hands."

"Not at all. I'm your friend."

"A fine friend!"

"Oh, that's all right. You would get yourself into trouble and now—"

"Whose doing is it? Who tempted me? Who tried to blackmail me? Who—"

"There, there! Keep cool, Mellen. You've got no friend on earth but me to-night, that's one thing sure. Listen; you can make it for my in-

terest to befriend you, and for your own sake you must do it. Think of your standing in society. Think of years in State prison staring you in the face. Think——"

"That will do. I've thought of it all."

"No, you haven't. You have forgotten that you are the heir to millions."

"That's where my trouble began!" he cried, bitterly. "If I had never committed that first crime I never should have been in your power. As for the millions you speak of, they can never be mine now."

333, crouching behind the chair, heard every word, and it is hardly necessary to say that he wondered what it was all about.

"I've a great mind to knock you on the head, tumble you overboard and take up with the bag," continued Garry, "but I won't do it, out of regard for you. Tell me where you buried the money and I'll guarantee to put you on board a South American steamer. You won't have to stay away long. I shall soon have it in my power to call you back, for just as soon as the bank people learn what's coming to you they'll be only too glad to compromise—see?"

Mr. Mellen only groaned.

"Will you tell me where you buried the money?" persisted Garry. "Was it somewhere about the old house down at Bay Ridge?"

"I don't know why I should tell you," muttered the cashier. "I don't believe a word you say. I don't believe you can help me to square things with my uncle or with the bank, either. I believe you'd sell me out for a shilling if it served your purpose. I wish I had never listened to you. I wish I'd gone straight to my uncle and owned the truth."

"If wishes were horses beggars might ride," chuckled Garry. "It's all right now, Mellen. You can't escape me. No power on earth can save you from my hands!"

Probably Garry, in this moment of triumph, thought he was telling the truth, but there was some one in the cabin of the Peters just then who thought differently, and that some one was our messenger boy, 333. As Garry spoke these last words the messenger boy seized him by both legs and pulled his feet out from under him. It was done like lightning, and Garry went down on his face, striking his forehead a fearful blow.

"Good heavens! you've killed him!" Mr. Mellen gasped.

"If I have killed him I can't help it!" breathed the boy, springing to his feet. "You stick to me, Mr. Mellen. We may not make a go of it, but I'm going to try almighty hard."

He whipped out his knife and cut the cashier free. Then he slipped out of the door with Mr. Mellen close to his heels.

"There's a boat astern," he whispered, "and there's a pair of oars in it. That's the way I'm going. If you've got nerve enough to risk it, come along!"

He crept to the stern of the tug, seized the rope and drew the boat close in. It was bobbing about on the waves in the most uncomfortable fashion, but Mr. Mellen managed to drop into it. 333 lost no time in following him. For a moment they clung to the tug, then the messenger boy's knife did the business, and the Peters went shooting off into the darkness and fog, leaving the boat behind.

"Thank heavens!" gasped the cashier. "Boy, you have saved me. Who are you? What's your name?"

"Haven't got any name," replied our hero, taking up the oars and beginning to row. "I'm only 333."

CHAPTER IX.—Treasure Hunting on the Shore.

"333! Seems to me I ought to know you," said the cashier. "Didn't you used to answer my calls at the bank?"

"Yes, sir, often."

"I thought so. Strange I didn't recognize you before. What's your name?"

"I told you before I haven't got any name," replied 333, pulling vigorously.

"Nonsense! What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Then, why don't you tell me your name?"

"Because it is just as I say. I haven't any. I'm a foundling. I don't know what my name is. Everybody calls me 333, and that's good enough."

"And you really have no name that you can lay claim to?"

"No."

"And no friends?"

"Mighty few. I've worked my way up out of the gutter. I didn't like gutter-snipes for friends, so I dropped all my old acquaintances, and my old name with them, and except the boys at the office I haven't made any new friends since."

"Strange! Never heard of such a case before. Who sent you with that message to me?"

"It's against the rules of the office to tell that. Besides, it don't make any difference now."

"It was the detectives, I suppose?"

"I didn't say so. Where do you want to go?"

"Get me ashore where you can. I don't suppose you'll try to detain me?"

"I couldn't very well do that. I was only thinking about the money you promised me."

"Oh, well, that's all right. That will come later."

"I'd like to see it come now. I suppose you have it about you?"

"What?"

"Ten thousand dollars!"

"Nonsense!"

"They say you got off with a lot more than that, Mr. Mellon."

"Don't be impertinent, boy, and don't believe all you hear. Put me ashore, and I'll pay you for this night's work; but I don't care to talk any further now."

Not wanting to be "too fresh," the messenger boy attended to his rowing and held his tongue, and so they went on through the fog.

"We must be pretty near the shore now," said the cashier at last. "I can hear the breakers, can't you?"

"I hear something like it."

"It's breakers, fast enough. Have you any idea where we are?"

"No more than you have. Somewhere down on the Bay Ridge shore, I suppose."

"It would be strange if it should be," muttered Mr. Mellen.

"What did you say?" asked 333, and then all at once a tug loomed up in the fog.

"Back! Back! Get back! There they are now!" the cashier gasped.

"Hush! Leave it to me. We are right on the shore," whispered 333.

He backed water until the tug was lost to view, and then with a few bold strokes drove the boat up on the pebbly beach.

They now found themselves under the steep bluffs which skirt the Bay Ridge shore of the Upper Bay, and right in front of them was a huge square boulder.

"Well, well! This is strange!" breathed Mr. Mellen. "This is strange enough!"

"What is strange?" asked 333.

"No matter. Boy, do you want to get that money I promised you?"

"Why, of course!"

"Do you want to get it now?"

"Certainly."

"You shall have it, if you'll promise never to breathe one word of what has happened tonight."

"All right. The boodle is buried here, I suppose?"

"Well, it is. It is strange, very strange, that we should happen to land at this identical spot, but here we are, and we may as well make the most of it! Show me one of the oars."

333 took an oar out of the boat and handed it to Mr. Mellen.

The tide was well out or they could not have stood where they were, and the cashier, listening attentively a moment, proceeded to pace off the ground back from the big boulder. 333 followed him, watching and listening. He could hear voices in the direction of the tug, and now all at once he heard the ring of metal.

"Hush! Did you hear that?" breathed the cashier. "They are digging. They have got the wrong place. Stupid idiot! He thinks I was fool enough to bury it right in front of the house. Hold on now, 333; here we are."

He struck the oar down into the sand and stopped. The messenger boy watched him breathlessly. Let us do 333 justice, and say that he had no other idea than to recover the stolen cash for the bank. It was only thoughts of the big reward which ran through his head when Mr. Mellen began to dig in the sand. Now, an oar is not a very handy thing to dig with, but the cashier managed it so well as to lead 333 to suspect that he might have used one when he dug there before. He soon scooped out a hole some three or four feet deep.

"Can I have made a mistake?" he whispered. "It isn't here—yes, by thunder, here it is!"

He stooped down and, bending over the hole, began tugging at something. Up came a big cash-box, and Mr. Mellen sprang to his feet.

"Follow me, boy!" he whispered, and he was just starting along the shore when suddenly a light was flashed upon them and a stern voice called out:

"Stand where you are, Mellen, or I fire! Drop the box! Drop it now!"

recognized Detective Ned Nelson, Pete Nugent's assistant. Here was a worse enemy than Garry for the defaulter. He instantly whipped out a revolver and fired, and the detective fired back at him. Neither shot took effect, apparently.

"Run, 333! Run for your life with the box! Wait for me up on Third avenue! I'll be there if I escape!" whispered Mr. Mellen, firing again.

This time the detective got the shot in the left arm and fell back with a cry of pain, firing as he did so. What the end of it was 333 did not find out then, for he ran off into the fog as though Satan himself was at his heels.

"Stop! Stop there, you boy!"

Bang! bang! bang! Shouts and shots followed the messenger boy. They only sent him on the faster. 333 had the big end of the stick, for he had the money, and he had no more idea of stopping than he had of drowning himself in the bay. But could he escape? For a few moments it seemed doubtful. He could hear several persons running after him. The beach was covered with loose stones, slippery with seaweed and hard to run over. He tried it higher up, but the sand impeded his progress here. Further up still was the high bluff, and 333 found himself against it in a moment. He would have climbed to the top if such a thing had been possible, but it was not right here, so he changed his tactics and dropped down behind a big boulder and lay there panting, waiting for his pursuers to go by. It was the fog that saved him. Three men were up to the boulder in a moment. 333 took them for the captain of the Tormentor and a couple of deck-hands, and probably they were.

"He must have gone this way!" cried one.

"He did!" replied the other. "Confound his picture! It's a blame shame to lose the money now, with our share of the reward in sight."

They ran on. He crept along under the cliff until he came to a flight of wooden steps leading up from a bath-house built on the beach. This discovery ended all difficulty. 333 was upon the shore road in a moment. Here he ran for dear life until he came to a cross street, through which he hurried up to Third avenue. A trolley car from Fort Hamilton was just passing, and it whirled the messenger and his precious box away to the Brooklyn Bridge. In due time 333 reached his room, and when he went to the office the next day the cash-box went with him, and Mr. Wilkie, the manager, had the pleasure of listening to his strange tale.

"Well, upon my word, you seem to be born to good luck!" said Mr. Wilkie. "This box certainly belongs to the Twentieth National Bank."

"Shall I take it up there, sir?" asked the messenger boy, respectfully.

"I think you had better. We have nothing to do with Nugent's detective office. You answered the call and did your work, and came very near losing your life by doing it. Yes, you shall take it there alone. I'll settle with Nugent. Don't you open your mouth on the subject except to me or the bank people; unless, indeed, the case comes into court; then you will have to speak."

"All right, sir," replied 333, and he walked boldly into the bank and inquired for Mr. Danvers, the president.

He was shown into a private office, where he met a white-haired, stately old gentleman, who

CHAPTER X.—333 Earns a \$5,000 Reward.

As the lantern was flashed upon the money-diggers through the fog both 333 and Mr. Mellen

looked pale and careworn, and so feeble that 333 felt sorry for him.

"Well, my boy, what do you want with me?" he asked. "Great heavens! Our cash box! Where did you get this?"

This exclamation was the beginning of a long talk. 333 told his story. The box was opened and in it the greater part of the stolen funds were found. Others came in and the story was told again and again. Mr. Danvers was greatly excited. He questioned 333 most closely about Mr. Mellen.

"I wonder if he escaped?" he kept saying. "I wonder if he escaped?"

"Can I go now, sir?" asked the messenger boy, when he again found himself alone with the bank president.

"Yes—that is, wait. There is a reward here. You are certainly entitled to it. I will confer with the directors. What is your name?"

"Well, sir, it may seem strange to you but I really haven't any name," was the answer. "You better use my number, same as every one else does. Put me down as 333."

"But you surely must have a name," persisted Mr. Danvers.

"You can call me Pat Murphy if you want to. That is the name I used to go by. I'm a foundling, sir. I don't know anything about myself. I didn't like that name, so I dropped it, and now everybody calls me 333."

"A foundling," repeated Mr. Danvers, looking at him fixedly. "Dear me, you look so much like her—but, no! It is impossible. Tell me your history, boy."

"I haven't any, sir."

"But you must have some life story. Have you always lived in New York?"

"Always. When I was a kid I lived with an old woman named Murphy. She had half a dozen boys like me. We used to beg for her and she beat us when we didn't bring in any money. When I got bigger I ran away and sold papers, and blacked boots, and did any old thing to support myself. At last I got acquainted with a Wall Street gent and he got me on the district force and I've been there ever since. That's all the story I've got."

"Poor boy! You've had a hard time of it, I suppose," mused the bank president.

"Yes, sir, I have, but I have worked hard and tried to keep myself respectable. It would have been an easy matter for me to turn out a bum, but I just wouldn't and that's all. But what about that reward?"

"You'll hear from me later. How correctly you speak! Have you been to school?"

"To night-school, sir. Never had a chance to go to day school."

"Ah! Those night-schools are good things. Well, my boy, I will not forget you. To put \$10,000 into your hands involves a great responsibility, but—well, I'll see about it. I have no right to hold the money back, I suppose."

This ended the interview. 333 did not see Mr. Danvers again for some time, however. Later he heard that Mr. Mellen was the president's nephew and that he had escaped the detectives and no one knew where he had gone. Later still—~~it~~ was a month—333 was sent for and upon going to the bank received the sum of \$5,000 in cash.

Mr. Danvers was not there then. It was said that he was sick and confined to the house. The remaining \$5,000 went to Nugent's private detective agency, which 333 thought rather unjust, but Mr. Wilkie advised him to be satisfied with what he had got, so 333 pocketed the cash, signed a receipt and went back to work, and not a messenger boy in the office ever knew of his good fortune, he kept right at his post just as though nothing had occurred.

CHAPTER XI.—Who Said Diana?

Meanwhile 333 worked straight on, for he knew no other business and rather enjoyed the excitement of a messenger boy's life.

"You cannot hope to do much toward bettering yourself until you have gone a little further with your education," said Mr. Wilkie, who had become a staunch friend of the boy. "Keep on at night-school for a while longer and I will see what I can do for you."

"You can't do anything for me, Mr. Wilkie," replied 333, quietly. "My mind is made up."

"What do you propose?" asked the manager.

"To educate myself. I'm going through college. I can never be anything until I'm educated. I know that perfectly well."

"You've got a long head, 333," said Mr. Wilkie. "I was going to advise you to invest your money in real estate, but if you mean to use it as you say, perhaps it would be better to let it stay at the bank."

"Just what I intend to do, Mr. Wilkie. I'm not fitted for college yet, but another year at night-school will put me there, my teacher says."

"Well, don't study too hard," said Mr. Wilkie. "It seems most too much for a boy to work all day and all night, too. Still, you are one of the kind that will get there, 333."

So the messenger boy worked on, and the summer passed and fall came again. It was early in November when his next strange adventure came.

"By Jove! here's that man Oliver at it again!" exclaimed Mr. Wilkie, as the number dropped. "He has put in more calls for new hands than any one I ever saw. Guess you better take him this time, 333."

It was the first time 333 had been sent to Mr. Oliver, although most of the other boys had taken their turn there.

"Hello, t'ree-t'irty-t'ree! Where are yez off to now?" asked Danny O'Neil, happening to run into our hero at the corner of Broad and New Streets as he was hurrying along to answer his call.

"Oliver, No. — Broad," was the answer.

"Gee! You don't say? Know what I t'ink about dat shop, t'ree-t'irty-t'ree?"

"No, Dan. What?"

"Crooked," said Danny, rolling up his eyes mysteriously.

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh, I d'n know. I kinder suspicion 'em. The boss wears black specs fer wan t'ing. Dere's a blame pretty gal in dere, dough."

"Oh, you are always looking out for crooks," laughed our messenger boy, as he hurried away.

The building on Broad Street to which 333 had

been sent was one of the older ones. It was shabby and in bad order, and had no elevator.

333 climbed the stairs to the top floor and found Mr. Oliver's name on a door in the rear.

"Miscellaneous Securities," was below it, which really gave no clue to the man's business. A middle-aged gentleman wearing black spectacles sat at a desk, busily writing, but there was no other sign of the pretty girl than a typewriting machine in one corner.

"Hello, boy, you're slow!" growled the man, looking up. "Take this letter and go to the Cortlandt Street ferry. Be there at four o'clock and watch the passengers off the boat. If a man comes up to you and says Diana, you give him the letter. That's all. You come right away then, but if he don't come you are to be there again at six and watch for him. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied 333, taking the letter.

He got out of the office in a hurry, and ran back to Mr. Wilkie as fast as he could go.

Unfortunately, the manager had gone home for the day, and 333 felt very sorry for this. It is not necessary to say anything more in explanation of the reason than to mention that the shrewd little fellow had recognized Mr. Oliver in spite of his black spectacles as a gentleman whom he had met before. It was none other than "Curtis."

The recollection of the adventure in the department store came back to 333 with full force.

"Danny was right. It's the same old gang of crooks," thought 333. "What shall I do about it, as long as Mr. Wilkie is not around?"

He thought for a moment, and determined to say nothing to Mr. Wilkie's assistant.

"I rather think I'm in for another adventure with those fellows," he said to himself. "I'm just going to put it through alone."

So he went to the ferry and stood before the gates when the four o'clock boat came in.

He was there two boats ahead, and he waited three boats after, but no one spoke to him. Then he went back to the office and made a confidant of Danny O'Neil.

"I want your help, Dan," he said, after telling him his suspicions. "You can spare me the evening, can't you?"

"You bet I can, t'ree-t'irty-t'ree," replied Danny. "You seem to get all dat kind of calls. I'd just like to get in on one for de fun of de t'ing. What do you want me to do?"

"Just to watch me, Dan, and follow me, if I go off with any one. Keep your eyes open and if you think there is any danger for me, call a cop and tell him all about it. I'm going to see this thing through to the end, but I don't care to get myself into trouble again."

"I'm wid yez anny way, t'ree-t'irty-t'ree," declared Danny. "Come along."

So Danny stood on the corner of Cortlandt Street and West, watching 333, while our messenger boy watched the gate when six o'clock came. The six o'clock boat came in, but no one spoke to 333. He waited for the next, and among the first passengers to come through the gate was a stout, thick-set fellow, with a big felt hat and shabby old overcoat, who attracted his attention by the way he stared around.

"A countryman," thought 333. "Wonder if that's my man? He's rubber-necking enough, anyhow."

Just then the man's eyes rested upon him. He walked right past 333.

"Diana!"

Somebody said it! Was it the man in the shabby overcoat? 333 thought so. He sprang forward and laid his hand upon the man's arm,

CHAPTER XII.—Mr. Sawyer.

"Well, boy, what do you want with me?" asked the man in a half surly way, walking straight on across West Street.

He looked at 333 sharply, however, and the boy saw that his face wore a peculiar smile.

"Did you say Diana?" asked 333.

"What if I did?"

"In that case I have a letter for you, providing you can tell me the name on the envelope."

"Hello! Suppose I told you that the name was Sawyer?"

"That would be all right. Here's the letter, sir."

"Don't give it to me here, boy. Go across to the gin-mill on the corner. I'll talk to you there."

333 pulled away immediately.

"Watch me, Danny," he whispered, as he passed his friend.

When he entered the saloon the man was at the bar pouring out a huge drink of whisky.

"Here's a letter for you, Mr. Sawyer," said 333, walking up to him.

"Hello! Letter for me? Yes, that's right," was the reply.

Mr. Sawyer tore open the envelope, glanced at the letter and thrust it into his pocket.

"Have a drink, bub?" he said, in his abrupt way.

"No, sir. I don't drink," replied 333.

"Have a package of cigarettes, then?"

"No, sir, thank you. I don't smoke cigarettes."

"Well, have this?"

It was a silver dollar this time, and 333 dropped it into his pocket.

"I'd like to say a word to you, mister," he ventured to remark.

"Say it," replied Mr. Sawyer, putting his glass on the bar and turning upon the messenger boy.

"You're a stranger in town, perhaps, sir?"

"I am. Never was in New York before in my life. I belong South. Well?"

"I think I ought to warn you to be careful how you deal with the man who wrote that letter. That's all."

"Why?"

"I don't want to say. It's not my business."

"By Jove! I'll make it your business, then. I pay for what I get. I want to get what you know."

"I happen to know that he has been in trouble with the police, that's all, sir."

"Just so. Much obliged. Boy, I suppose you know all the ins and outs of this yer town?"

"Well, I know it pretty well, sir."

"Born hyar, p'r'aps?"

"Yes."

"Never lived nowhere else, mebbe?"

"No."

"Are you through yur day's work?"

"Yes, sir. This will be my last call."

"Come with me, then, and stick close to me. Ten dollars for the job. Is it a go?"

"Yes," replied 333, promptly, for he was determined to see the adventure through.

Mr. Sawyer paid for his drink, bought a dollar's worth of cigars, and thrusting them loose in his pocket, hastily left the saloon.

"Take me to Broadway, boy," he said, and up Cortlandt Street they went, with Danny O'Neil close at their heels.

They walked along uptown on Broadway for several blocks, Mr. Sawyer never speaking a word.

But his eyes were everywhere, and when he reached the Astor House he stepped up to an empty cab which stood at the curb and said something to the driver in a low voice.

"Now, then, tell me all you know about this man Oliver!" he exclaimed, as the cab started on uptown.

333 thought of Danny, but it was too late to do anything about that now. He could see no reason why he should not tell the story of the shoplifting incident to Mr. Sawyer, and he did so, stopping right there and saying nothing about the mysterious house uptown.

"Huh! A crook! I thought as much," growled Mr. Sawyer.

He lit a cigar and for a while smoked in silence. The cab ran up Park Row and turned into the Bowery, stopping in front of a clothing store.

"Get out here and go in and fit yourself to a suit of clothes. Leave your uniform to be sent home to-morrow," said Mr. Sawyer, putting a ten-dollar bill into the messenger boy's hand. Then he leaned out and called up an address to the driver.

"That's our next call," he said, as 333 stepped out of the cab. "What are you waiting for, boy? Why don't you go in?"

"Because I've got something more to tell you," replied 333. "You'd better look out!"

The address given was that of the mysterious house uptown in which 333 and Mr. Babcock had their strange experience, now more than a year ago.

CHAPTER XIII.—Green Goods Business.

"Get your clothes first and do your talking afterward," said Mr. Sawyer, in reply to 333's hasty remark. "There's going to be music in the air to-night, and I'm to be the fiddler. Don't you be one bit afraid."

There was simply no resisting the man. 333 gave one look around for Danny O'Neil, but could see nothing of him. Then he went into the clothing store, picked out a suit, put it on, left his own to be sent to his room, and returned to the hack.

"Now we can do business," remarked Mr. Sawyer, as they rode on. "Before, we couldn't. Come, my boy, tell me all you know about these people. I don't doubt for a moment that you heard the address and know where we are bound."

He accordingly did so, and omitting only names, gave a full account of his acquaintance with Garry, Curtis and the rest of the gang.

"Are you sure this man Oliver and your Curtis are the same?"

"Why, I can't be sure, sir. You see, it's a good while ago."

"But you think so?"

"I do."

"How did you recognize him?"

"By his face, his height and his general appearance, and particularly by a small scar on his forehead."

Mr. Sawyer chewed the end of his mustache a few moments, and then said:

"Well, boy, I'm ever so much obliged to you for your friendly warning. I knew you were fly as soon as you spoke, but I did not guess you were as sharp as you are. If this night's work comes to anything you won't regret having trusted me. What's your name?"

Then followed the old conversation so often repeated. There is no denying that 333 rather took pride in having no name. He could not make Mr. Sawyer believe it, however. When he persisted in giving only his number, it was easy to see that the stranger was somewhat vexed.

"All right, keep your name to yourself if you want to," he said, "but you make a mistake in not telling me. Hello! here we are!"

The hack had stopped. 333 looked out of the window and saw that, sure enough, they had drawn up before the mysterious house.

"This the place?" asked Sawyer.

"This is the place?" replied 333.

"All right. Out with you. Remember, you are my son. You've come with me from Henrique, Louisiana. Don't forget that. For the rest, keep your mouth shut, that's all."

Thus saying, Mr. Sawyer ran up the steps and rang the bell. After a brief wait the door was opened by a sad-looking young woman. It was "Miss Adams," and no one else. She eyed the visitors critically, but 333 saw no sign of recognition in her face.

"I want to see Mr. Cornwall," said the Southerner. "My name is Sawyer. I've called by appointment. Is he in?"

"Yes," replied "Belle," in a low voice. "You are to go into that room, but nothing was said about the boy."

"He goes where I go," was the reply. "He is my son."

Again, Belle gave the messenger boy a critical look. She still barred the way and seemed about to speak, but just then the parlor door was thrown open and Garry stepped out, whereupon Belle hastily withdrew.

"Come right in!" said Garry. "You are Mr. Sawyer, of Henrique, I presume?"

"I am," replied Mr. Sawyer. "This is my son." "Humph! You ought not to have brought a boy with you."

"I had to. I had no one to leave him with. It's all right."

"Well, come in, anyhow," said Garry, opening the door wider. "This is not boys' business, though."

They were shown into the same old parlor. Nothing had changed.

"My!" exclaimed Mr. Sawyer. "You're fixed up pretty slick here. The business must pay."

"It does," replied Garry. "Have a chair. You'll find it pays when you come to handle two or three lots of our dough, and don't you forget it. Nothing like it, Mr. Sawyer. Can't be told from the genuine article. Here's some of it—have a look."

Garry pulled out a huge roll of bills from his

pocket and flourished it in the face of Mr. Sawyer, running the bills over with his fingers. There were fives, tens and twenties in the roll.

"Green goods business," thought 333, and he felt rather disgusted to think that he had run against anything so common. Had Mr. Sawyer come up from Louisiana to buy? Apparently he had. He took several of the bills from Garry and examined them closely.

"They look all right," he said.

"They are all right," replied Garry. "Hadn't you better send the boy out into the hall?"

"No; he stays with me."

"Well have it your own way. Now, to business. How heavy do you want to go in?"

"I've brought three thousand dollars with me."

"Go it all?"

"I reckon I will."

"How will you have it, large or small?"

"Better make it fives and tens."

"All right; just step over here."

Garry led Mr. Sawyer to a large desk, which stood against the folding doors separating the front parlor from the one behind. 333 remained where he was watching. All this was old business. There is not a messenger boy in New York who would not have been "on to" the trick. 333 knew perfectly well that there must be a secret panel in the desk, and that the box to be prepared for Mr. Sawyer would be passed into it and one containing sawdust or old paper given him in exchange.

333 saw him count out a large sum in new bills and put it in a box. Mr. Sawyer paid his cash and was just about to take the box when Garry, pushing it further back on the desk, said:

"Just wait a minute; let's have a drink."

"Not for me!" cried Sawyer, springing up and whipping out a revolver, with which he covered Garry. "Hand over that box, or you're a dead man! Skip, 333! Get the police!"

"That blamed messenger boy again!" Garry cried, making a spring at Mr. Sawyer and trying to wrench the revolver away.

CHAPTER XIV.—A Friend in Need.

333 was upon his feet in an instant, but he did not start out of the house after the police. To have done so would have been to desert Mr. Sawyer in his extremity. Sawyer instantly fired, but missed his man. In a twinkling the revolver was dashed out of his hands, and he and Garry were down and struggling upon the floor. That was the time the brave little messenger boy jumped in to help. He almost got the revolver, too, and if he had succeeded the result might have been different. The next instant the folding doors burst open and two men sprang into the room. They were Tom and Curtis, alias Oliver.

"Kill him, Garry! Kill him!" cried Tom, pouncing upon 333 and striking the boy a cruel blow between the eyes, which sent him reeling back against the piano. By this time Curtis had the revolver, and Mr. Sawyer had been choked into unconsciousness.

Tom had his back against the parlor door, and Curtis held the boy covered with the revolver.

"So, so! It's you again!" hissed Garry, springing up and shoving his fist in the messenger boy's

face. "By time! you've got a nerve to come to this house! Look here, boy, you'll never leave it alive!"

"No, no! Don't kill him! Don't, for my sake!" called a voice between the folding doors.

There was Belle, as white as a sheet.

"Spare his life!" she added. "If you don't, so help me heaven I'll split and tell the police all that has ever happened in this evil den!"

"You will, eh?" snarled Garry, turning fiercely upon her. "Try it, you squawking jaybird, and I'll—"

He said no more, for Tom and Curtis both sprang upon him as he made a rush for the girl.

This was the messenger boy's chance, as he thought. 333 ducked under the grand piano, got out on the other side near the door, which he instantly flung open and went bounding into the hall.

The door was chained, and before poor 333 could let down the chain they were all upon him.

Tom caught him by the throat and Curtis kicked him savagely. Then his head was forced back and Tom pried his mouth open. 333 bit him once, but that did not save him. To his horror he saw Garry produce a small bottle and spring toward him. His struggles were useless. Half the contents of the bottle went down his throat and for the time being that was the end of 333. "There!" exclaimed Garry, "that settles him. He must never leave this place alive. Where's Belle?"

"Gone to her room," replied Curtis. "Don't you ever dare to raise your hand against that girl again."

"Then don't let her dare to interfere with my business and threaten us. I've had enough of her airs and fine ways. She's not what she used to be. Let her look out for herself. I'll stand no monkey-business, that's flat."

It took Tom to interfere.

"Stop!" he cried. "I'll have no more of it. Is the other one dead?"

"I guess so," growled Garry. "He was pretty near it when I took my hands off. What about this boy?"

"Look at him and see if it is going to pay us to kill him?" replied Tom, with a sneer.

"Well?"

"Can't you see?"

"No, I'll be gosh-blamed if I can."

"Have you forgotten Mellen's story the night we had him full in here? The night of the poker game?"

"You don't mean that, Tom?"

"I do."

"But this can't be the boy?"

"Certainly not, but he'll answer the purpose. Remember, it's fifty thousand dollars reward."

"But will he answer the purpose? What do you mean?"

"You fool! Can't you see! Look down there and—"

"By thunder, you're right!" broke in Garry, bending over the boy, "but you can never work it—never! The boy is too fly."

"Yes, but he's only a messenger boy, and don't you forget it, he's on the make. When we tell him what it all means he'll jump at it, and we'll bleed him afterward. We'll work it both ways."

They withdrew to the parlor then, leaving 333 lying on the mat. They had scarcely turned their

backs when Belle came gliding out from the shadows of the hall. She hastily drew a small bottle from her pocket, and removing the cork, shook some of the white powder which it contained into the half-open mouth of the messenger boy.

The sympathetic girl had recognized the messenger boy in spite of what he thought to the contrary. The white powder in the bottle was the antidote to the knock-out drops. It was not the first time by any means that Belle had occasion to use it in that evil den. Twenty minutes later 333 opened his eyes and stared around. He was lying upon a cot-bed in a small room which was lighted dimly by a lantern suspended from the ceiling. Belle stood beside him with a pitcher and a glass in her hand.

"Drink this, boy," she said, pouring a dark liquid into the glass. "It will do you good."

CHAPTER XV.—What Plot Is This?

"It tastes like cold coffee," he said. "Thank you."

"It is cold coffee. It's an antidote for the stuff they gave you. 333, whatever possessed you to venture back into this house?"

"It was that man!" gasped the messenger boy. "Did they kill him? Is he dead?"

"Dead, no! You can't kill his kind. He's as bad as the rest of them. Oh, why did you ever come here? You knew what they were."

"Help me to get out and I won't bother you long," said 333, sitting up. "I know I got knock-out drops and I expect you saved my life. I'm so thankful to you. I don't know what to say."

"Then don't try," replied Belle, hastily. "No, I didn't save your life. That dose never kills. I only shortened your trance to give you time. Listen, boy. You once did me a service, and I'm ready to pay you now. Get up and follow me."

"Tell me what to do and I'll do it," he said; "but why can't you come with me? You're too good to stay in this house. Why don't you walk away and leave it now?"

Belle burst into tears.

"Oh, why, sure enough!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "It used to be on account of my mother, but she is dead now. She never guessed what was going on here. Now it is my brother, but I ought not to cling to him. He has made me what I am—a criminal like himself, but—well, never mind, I can't go now, but the time is close at hand when I shall break away in spite of him. Come! We must get while they are busy with other matters. Follow me."

She took down the lantern and led the way out of the room, carefully locking the door behind her. 333 now found himself in a cellar. There was coal and wood here, and over in one corner were a lot of old barrels piled up. Belle led the way behind the barrels, which stood out a foot or so from the wall. Running her hand along the wall, she pressed some hidden spring and several of the stones moved inward.

"That's your way, boy," she whispered. "I don't dare to go with you, for fear that I may be missed. Follow on to the end of the passage. It will lead you to the cellar of the house on the other street, where you were before."

"Look along the wall and you will see the bolt."

After you are once in the cellar it will be easy to get out. Go, now and for goodness sake never come here again!"

She pushed 333 gently into the passage, handed him the lantern, and closed the door behind him.

"I'm going for the police this time," he muttered, as he hurried along through the passage. "This thing is played out. Whether it gets me into trouble or not, I'm going to give those fellows away."

In a moment he was at the end of the passage, and found himself up against a stone wall. He looked for the bolt which Belle had told him was so easy to find, and sure enough, there it was. There was no difficulty in opening the secret door here, and no doubt 333 would have gained the street a moment later if it had not happened that at that very moment Tom and Garry chanced to be in the cellar on the other side. They were just coming after 333, and there he was standing before them as the secret door flew back.

"Great Scott! That blamed messenger boy again!" gasped Garry. "Hang me if he isn't as slippery as an eel!"

333 almost dropped the lantern in his amazement. There he stood with his mouth open and never said a word, but he saw Tom nudge Garry and give him a warning look. Then in the most friendly way the villain held out his hand.

"Shake, boy!" he exclaimed. "Blamed if I don't admire your grit! How did you come to be here?"

"Well, I'm trying to get out," replied 333. "Say, they'll be looking for me. You'd better let me go."

"I'll do better than that," replied Tom, "if you'll just be good enough to tell me how you got out of that room."

"Oh, I managed the lock."

"And found the door at the other end of this passage? Nobody showed it to you, I s'pose?"

"I didn't need that. I had no trouble in finding it."

"Humph! That so? Well, you are sharp. We are trying to do you up. Say, do you like money, my boy?"

"Not the kind you deal in, boss," grinned the messenger boy. "I can't use green goods—no!"

"I don't mean that kind," he said. "What if I should tell you of a scheme which would give you a million?"

"How?"

"Hold on. Are you game to do as I tell you if you can see a million dollars at the end of the string I'm going to put into your hand?"

There was no use in saying no, 333 thought. Therefore he said, "Yes."

"What did I tell you?" said Tom, turning to Garry.

"He's fooling you," growled Garry.

"Try me and see," said 333, boldly. "I'm on the make as well as the next one, but it will be pretty hard to make me believe that you fellows are not fooling me."

"I can do it," said Tom. "Come right along with us, boy, and I'll tell you something that will make you open your eyes."

333 followed them quietly into the cellar and upstairs into the room behind the parlor, where he had climbed into the window on the night of his former visit to the house.

"Stay here a minute," said Tom, and 333 did

stay with his ear clapped to the keyhole of the folding doors, which position he took the instant they left the room and had locked him in.

"Now, then, Sawyer, we've got the boy in the other room," he heard Tom say. "If you want to go in with us, we'll let up on you and give you a chance."

"Isn't there no other way?" was Sawyer's answer. "I own you are too slick for me. I came all the way up from Orleans on purpose to get the best of you. Waal, I didn't do it, and I s'pose you'll have to let me go sooner or later, but if I listen to this yere there's no telling where I'll land."

"I'll tell you where you'll land, if you say no," 333 heard Tom say.

"Where?"

"In the North River with a big stone about your neck."

"And if I go in with you?"

"It's your money back and a thousand plunks besides."

"Good!" replied Mr. Sawyer. "On them conditions, boss, I'll swear to anything you say."

CHAPTER XVI.—How To Turn a Messenger Boy Into a Millionaire.

"What plot can this be?" thought the messenger boy, pressing his ear closer to the keyhole.

But he did not hear any more then. The voices of the speakers in the other room sank into whispers. They talked for some time, and then 333 heard Mr. Sawyer say:

"Leave the boy to me. I'll teach him his part. He'll obey, never you fear."

"Very well," was Tom's answer. "Now, mind, it's all right, but don't let him try to leave this house until the job is done."

That was the time 333 thought he had better get out and shake Mr. Sawyer altogether, for he did not relish the idea of remaining a prisoner at all. He made for the window, thinking to take his chances in the back yards, but he was balked at the very start. Since his previous experience in the house a year before, there had been heavy iron bars put in place at the window. There was no such a thing as escaping.

"I'll jolly them into letting me out," thought 333, and the thought had scarcely crossed his mind when the door opened and in walked Tom.

"Well, young man," he said, "how are you now?"

"All right," replied the messenger boy. "How much longer are you going to leave me here? Thought you was going to tell me how to make a big strike."

"Oh, your friend Sawyer will do that," laughed Tom. "We have made up our quarrel, he and I. We are going back to the other house to have some dinner now, and want you to come along."

"And do I get my instructions there?" asked 333 as innocently as if he had never overheard one word.

"Yes, you do," added Mr. Sawyer, coming into the room.

He seemed quite at home, and looked as cool and collected as though nothing had occurred.

"It's all right, my boy," he added. "If you want to get out of the messenger business, and

make a big strike, we can put you in the way of doing it. All you've to do is just to tie yourself to me."

333 thought that Mr. Sawyer gave an almost imperceptible wink. Still he could not be sure that this was so, and he did not care very much whether it was or not, for he had fully made up his mind to chime in with their plans and see where this new turn of affairs was going to lead him.

"I've been good for these fellows before, and I'll be good for them again," he thought.

But he said, aloud:

"Why, of course, I'm on the make. You ought to know that, mister. Didn't I do well in the Mellen business a year ago?"

"By Jove, you did, then!" cried Tom, with a short laugh. "You made all there was to be made out of it, and we got left. Say, have you ever seen Mr. Danvers since?"

"Never. What became of that man Mellen?"

"Oh, he went to South America," was the careless reply. "Come along now. We are going back to the other house."

They returned by way of the passage, and this time 333 was ushered into the back parlor. The folding doors had been thrown open and a table stood spread for dinner. Garry sat by the open grate fire smoking a cigar. Everything looked as cozy and comfortable as possible. Garry got up and shook hands with 333.

"You're a blame smart fellow, that's what you are," he said. "For a kid, you are a wonder. So you are going to join in with us, eh?"

"Yes. I am, if there is any money in it, you bet," replied 333.

At this moment the door opened and Belle entered, carrying a platter with a big piece of smoking hot roast beef. The confidence men and Mr. Sawyer drew up to the table, 333 taking his place beside the Southerner. Garry carved the beef and Belle passed the dishes around. It was a splendid dinner. Later champagne was opened, and the three men drank freely. 333 wondered how Mr. Sawyer dared to run the risk of drinking anything in that house. For his own part, he refused the wine each time.

"Afraid we'll knock you out again, eh?" asked Garry, with a short laugh. "You needn't worry. You're safe. Most time that messenger was back, isn't it Tom?"

"I should say it was," replied Tom. "He's been gone long enough. Sha'n't we explain to the boy now?"

"I think we may as well. You do it."

"All right. Have a cigar, Mr. Sawyer. You'll find it a good one. Now, then, let's sit up around the fire and talk. First of all, 333, what is really your name?"

"Pat Murphy," replied our hero, promptly.

"Father and mother living?"

"No, I'm an orphan. I never knew either my father or my mother."

"How about relations?"

"Haven't any. I'm a foundling."

"The deuce you say! Why, you are the very one we want. What's your story? Who are you, anyhow? Where were you born? Tell us all about it."

"There's nothing to tell, boss. I'm just a New York street boy."

"Where did you get your education? You talk too well for that."

"Picked it up at night-school. I'm no loafer. I believe in working. I've always worked since I was able to walk."

"Just so," replied Tom. "Well, your working days are over, if you'll only do as we tell you. Now, the story is this, young feller. There's a certain millionaire in this town what lost a grandson years ago. The kid was stolen as a baby from the nurse girl in the park, and ever since then the old man has been looking for him. We propose to help him find the boy, who, if still alive, ought to be just about your age. Do you catch on?"

"Yes," said 333 promptly. "You want me to be the boy."

"Exactly. How does it strike you?"

"I'll do it."

"Good enough! I knew he'd fly!" cried Garry.

"Told you it would be all right," added Sawyer. "Blame good cigar this. Say, 333, you'll be smoking 25 centers when you get to be a millionaire."

"Well, I won't forget the fellows who made me one," laughed the messenger boy. "That's one thing sure."

"You're a brick," said Tom. "The job is as good as done. Let me tell you the rest. The missing heir had a big brown mole on the side of his neck, just back of the left ear."

"I've got that!"

"Of course you have; that's why we picked you out. Now, we've been working two weeks to manufacture a mole like yours on the neck of a certain boy, but we had to drop him. He was no good, and would never have filled the bill. When I seen you to-night I made up my mind that—"

Right here the bell rang.

"There's the messenger!" cried Garry, springing up.

"Look out this feller don't get recognized," said Tom, quickly.

"I don't know none of the uptown boys," said 333.

"All the same you had better step in behind that curtain," said Tom, and 333 was pushed into this place of concealment behind the heavy curtains which hung at the back window.

Meanwhile, Garry had gone to the door and now returned, ushering in a district messenger boy.

"Good for you!" muttered 333, peering out from behind the curtain.

The boy was Danny O'Neil.

CHAPTER XVII.—Waiting.

"What's this?" exclaimed Tom. "You're not the fellow I sent up to Fifth avenue."

"Dat's right, boss," replied Danny, his eyes roving all over the room. "Dat boy got tuk sick and had to go to de office wid de answer. De boss, he gave it to me to bring around."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" growled Garry, suspiciously. "Well, let's have it."

Danny handed over a letter. Garry thought the boy was looking right at him.

He would have been rather astonished if he had known what he was really looking at just then. The backs of the three men were turned toward

the window, and 333 taking chances pushed aside the curtain and showed himself to Danny, making a quick sign to him which he knew the boy would understand. Perhaps he did, and perhaps he didn't; Danny never turned a hair, but just stood there as meek as Moses, while Garry read the letter and passed it over to Tom.

"He's coming," he remarked.

"Good enough!" said Tom. "Here you are, boss."

He handed the letter to Mr. Sawyer.

"That's all right, then," said the Southerner, with a chuckle. "Do we want this boy any longer?"

"No," said Garry, putting his hand in his pocket and giving Danny a quarter.

"Thank you, sir," replied Danny. "Gee, what's de matter wid me? I've butter fingers tonight."

He dropped the quarter, which went rolling over toward the curtain, Danny making a dive for it.

"Get out of that!" cried Tom, turning on him.

"I got it, sir," replied Danny, jumping up off the floor. "All right! Good-night!"

So he had got it, and he got something else, too. There was a paper pellet where the quarter rolled. It dropped from behind the curtain. Danny saw it drop, and that was what was the matter with the quarter. When he got into the street he read as follows:

"I'm working a game, Dan. Put the coppers on to this house. Tell them to watch for a nob who's coming in, and to warn him. These fellers are rank skins."

This was 333's message, and it is safe to say that neither of the three men ever dreamed that he had delivered one when he came innocently out from behind the curtain a moment later.

"Did you see that boy, 333?" asked Garry.

"Yes."

"Know him?"

"I told you I didn't know any of the uptown messenger boys."

"You did well not to show yourself," said Tom.

"I don't suppose you mean to do it, but if you have the least notion of trying any funny business let me warn you you'll be shot dead where you stand the first moment we see the least cause to suspect you."

"That's all right," said 333, laughing. "I'm out for money, and don't you forget it, boss."

"Very good," replied Garry. "Now, you better go upstairs and take a nap. We'll call you when we are ready for you. Follow me."

He led the way up to a neat little chamber and turned the key on the messenger boy. 333 realized that he was a prisoner, and he sat down on the bed and tried to think. The next thing he knew he was awakened by a light hand being pressed against his forehead. 333 started up and saw Belle standing beside him, holding a small lamp in her hand.

"Don't do this thing, 333," she whispered, eagerly. "Don't lend yourself to this wicked plot."

"Don't you fear," replied the boy, in a whisper. "I'm fly."

"I believe you, but you mean to expose this house to the police. Isn't it so?"

333 was silent.

"You do," continued the girl. "I konw it. Don't. Escape while you can. I would have been here before if I had dared to come. Follow me."

and I'll put you in the street inside of two minutes. Do it for my sake, 333."

"Come with me, and I'll go," said the messenger, earnestly. "You are too good to be here, Miss Belle."

"No, it is impossible. I only wish I dared."

"Then you won't go?"

"I cannot; but you must."

"I can't refuse you, but——"

"Too late! Too late!" breathed the girl, suddenly.

A ring was heard at the doorbell, and at the same instant there was a heavy footstep on the stairs.

"I can do nothing for you now," whispered Belle, and she slipped out of the room, locking the door behind her.

"I'm in for it," thought 333, and he dropped back upon the bed and pretended to be fast asleep when Garry came into the room and laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Get up, 333!" he said. "The time has come. Get up and be ready to show yourself when you are called."

"I'm ready now," replied the boy, springing off the bed.

"That's the talk! Play your points well, boy, and, and I'm going to make a millionaire's heir out of you in ten minutes' time," Garry hastily replied.

There was something in these words which aroused strange thoughts in the messenger boy's mind.

Now for the first time temptation seized him.

"What if I should do it?" he thought. "It would be a fine thing to be heir to a million, and, after all, if this old fellow wants a grandson I'll be a good one to him. It can't do the man any harm."

CHAPTER XVIII.—Mr Sawyer Treats All Hands to a Little Surprise.

There was a wait of fully ten minutes. Suddenly a door was heard to open below and a voice called out:

"Come!"

"Now!" said Garry. "Keep cool, boy."

They went downstairs, and while yet in the hall 333 heard Mr. Sawyer talking through the half-open door.

"I can swear to the boy, mister," he was saying. "He was brought to our town down in Louisiana when he was a baby, and he's grown right up under my eye. Yes, sir, he had the half of a twenty-dollar gold-piece pierced and hung around his neck when I first saw him. I've got the piece down South now. Never thought to bring it up with me, but I can get it. Well, here he is to speak for himself."

"That boy!" cried a large, portly old gentleman, who sprang up as Garry and the messenger entered. "What fraud is this you are trying to play on me? That's district messenger boy 333!"

It was Mr. Danvers, president of the Twentieth National Bank. Tom and Sawyer stood staring almost as much confused as 333 himself.

"You're away off, Mr. Danvers," said the former, hastily. "This boy has just come from New Orleans. He was never in New York before today. We promised you we'd get the boy and we've

done it. He stands before you. Don't be deceived by any fanciful resemblance. Look at the mole on his neck. Examine him—question him. We've got the papers to prove that James Mellen sent the baby to New Orleans the day after it was stolen. Sit down, my dear sir, and keep cool."

"Speak, young man," said the banker. "Are you not the boy to whom I paid the big reward? Aren't you messenger No. 333?"

"I am!" replied our hero, in a low voice, "but, all the same, I think I may be the boy you are looking for, sir."

"Boy, what is your name? What is your history?" he demanded. "Tell me all, and tell me truly. Don't be afraid."

"I don't know, sir. I've nothing to tell," replied 333, "but here is something which I have always had by me ever since I can remember."

He ran his hand down under his collar and pulled up an object hung around his neck by a string. It was the half of a twenty-dollar gold-piece.

"Great heavens! is it so?" cried Mr. Danvers, turning deathly pale. "Stop, boy! Don't show it to me yet. Is it—is it marked with the letter D?"

"Yes, sir, it is!" cried 333.

"Then here is the mate to it!" said the banker, taking a similar piece from his pocket marked with the letter R. "Reginald Dewar, you are my daughter's son, long lost, but now, thank heaven, restored to me! Shake hands, my boy! Oh, if I had not been a fool I might have known this before!"

Thus saying, Mr. Danvers caught 333's hand and pressed it warmly, at the same time throwing an arm about his neck.

"Come!" he exclaimed. "Let us leave this place!"

"Not much you don't!" cried Garry, backing up against the door. "This is all right, although rather unexpected, but you pay your bill in this house before you leave it, just the same."

"Don't you pay them a cent!" cried 333. "They are a lot of confidence men and frauds!"

It was foolish, of course, but then 333 was rather excited at the time.

"You're right, we are, and we mean business!" cried Garry, whipping out a revolver.

"Our price was \$50,000, old man! We want every cent of it. You sign a check and stay here till we can cash it, understand?"

"Put up your pistol and stand aside," said Mr. Danvers, bravely. "I pay nothing, and I leave the house with this boy right now!"

"No, you don't!" hissed Tom, springing to Garry's side.

"Yes, he does!" said Sawyer, coolly drawing two revolvers and planting himself beside 333.

"Gentlemen, I am a detective," he added, coolly. "You are my prisoners. Resist me and I shall shoot you like the couple of curs that you are!"

CHAPTER XIX.—Caught in the Underground Passage.

Tom and Garry fell back aghast.

"Now, then, don't make no muss here," gasped the latter. "We give up. Get out of the house, the whole lot of you—that's all I ask now."

"And it's more than you'll get," replied Mr.

Sawyer, sternly. "The first one of you who attempts to leave this room gets a bullet. I am Joe Nedwell, of the New Orleans secret service. You green-goods men picked up the wrong dog when you opened correspondence with me."

"That's right!" cried Mr. Danvers. "Don't let them go, officer. I'll back you up in anything you do. I know you now! You——"

"I am the man you corresponded with a year ago, sir," broke in the detective, hurriedly. "You were looking for this boy then, and I supplied you with certain information about his early life in New Orleans. I haven't the least doubt that you have found the right boy, but you must understand that these men knew nothing about him. They meant to palm him off upon you as your lost grandson, little dreaming that he was actually the boy for whom you had searched so long. Speak up, there, you two, or one of you! Isn't it so?"

"Well, I suppose I've got to admit it. Yes, it's just as he tells it," growled Garry. "Say, can't this thing be fixed up? I'll pay——"

"Not me," broke in the detective. "I'm not to be bribed. 333, lend me a hand here."

"Yes, sir!" replied the messenger boy, promptly. He had been silent as became him, under the circumstances, and was only too glad to be of some use again.

"Take one of these revolvers and keep that man covered!" added the detective. "Mr. Danvers, I'll trouble you to do the same for the other. Thank you! Now I'll get the bracelets on these two scoundrels. We've been kind of slow tonight, 333, but we got there just the same."

It was all up with Tom and Garry. If Curtis had been on hand to help, perhaps they might have been able to turn the tables, but neither Curtis nor Belle had appeared, and Tom and Garry found themselves prisoners a moment later.

Joe Nedwell then led Tom and Garry out of the house.

"My dear boy! My daughter's son!" cried the banker, embracing 333 tenderly. "Oh, this is a great day for me and for you, too! Your troubles are all over now. From this time forward you are under my protection. Thank heaven for the strange fatality which brought us together tonight!"

"But are you sure, sir?" asked 333. "I don't want you to make any mistake. Remember, I know actually nothing about myself, and——"

"You have proved your identity," interrupted Mr. Danvers. "You are undoubtedly the boy who that scoundrel, James Mellen, had stolen so that he could usurp your place. But enough of this. I will tell you the whole story later. Ah! what now? Good heavens, Reginald, it is the police! They are about to descend upon the house. I wouldn't have this get into the papers for a thousand dollars! What shall we do?"

A patrol wagon had come dashing up to the front door. Out of it sprang Danny O'Neil and six policemen. Three of them ran up the steps and the bell was ringing furiously, all of which Mr. Danvers and 333 saw from behind the window-curtains.

"I think I can fix this, sir," he exclaimed. "We can go out by the other house. Follow me. There's

a girl here who has been very kind to me. I'd like to protect her, but——"

"Later! Later!" interrupted Mr. Danvers. "Any one who has been kind to you shall be amply rewarded, but don't stop now, Reginald. Let us keep this thing out of the papers if we possibly can. Lead on. I am in your hands."

333 slipped downstairs into the cellar, Mr. Danvers following him. They met no one, and the messenger boy found no difficulty in making his way into the secret passage.

He struck a match and led on under the yard, telling Mr. Danvers something of his previous experience there as they hurried along.

"What a lot of scoundrels they are, to be sure!" exclaimed the banker. "They richly deserve a term in Sing Sing, and I hope they may get it, but what about that third man you mention, Reginald? Is there no danger to us from him?"

"I hope not. I declare, I never thought of Curtis!" exclaimed 333, in dismay. "I suppose you haven't got a revolver about you, sir?"

"No, no! I never carry such a thing; and you?"

"I don't, either. I—there goes the match. I'll have to light another. Wait a moment. We better have a light before we go ahead."

"I hear somebody in front of us!" whispered Mr. Danvers. "Be quick with the match!"

"No hurry! Take your time!" a voice spoke out of the darkness. "If you fellows haven't a revolver, I have. I'll take care of you."

It was Curtis! The match flared up before he finished speaking. There he stood right in their path with a cocked revolver pointed at Mr. Danvers' head.

CHAPTER XX.—The Escape.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" cried the banker. "Good heavens! Put that thing down!"

"I'll ram it down your blamed throat!" sneered Curtis, striding toward them. "Get in ahead there! Get in with you! This game isn't up yet. I'll attend to your case, 333."

333's answer was rather peculiar, and it did not come in words. As Curtis came toward him he lowered his head, made one quick spring and butted the green-goods man in the stomach. Down they went together. The revolver was discharged in the struggle. Mr. Danvers cried out in terror. He need not have been alarmed. 333 was quite equal to the situation. Up he sprang, unharmed, and in possession of the revolver.

"That's me, Mr. What's-your-name!" he cried. "I've got the big end of the stick now. Follow us if you dare. Get on, grandfather. I'll guard the rear."

"Oh, if we were only out of this!" groaned Mr. Danvers. "But it is worth every risk to hear you call me by that name."

They were at the door a moment later. As for Curtis, he scrambled up and, shouting out some threatening words, ran back along the secret passage.

"The cops will get him sure, and I hope they do," said 333, trying to open the door.

It would not yield. To his disgust, 333 found that he had forgotten the working of the secret spring.

"What shall we do?" Mr. Danvers was exclaiming, when suddenly the door flew open and there stood Belle with a lighted lamp in her hand.

"The police have captured the other house. I know all!" she exclaimed. "What have you done to my brother, 333?"

"Nothing," replied the messenger boy, "but if he had not been your brother I should certainly have given him a taste of his own medicine. Is the way clear? We are going out."

"It is clear. Go, and never come back again!" replied Belle, greatly agitated. "Go out by the basement door."

"Come with us!" cried 333. "Grandfather, this is the young lady I spoke of. She has helped me more than once, and—"

"Come with us, my dear. Come! Abandon this life forever," pleaded the old gentleman, taking the girl's arm in a kindly way. "You cannot help your brother, but he can, and will bring ruin to you."

Belle burst into tears.

"Oh, my brother! How can I leave him?" she exclaimed. "I have stood by him so long—so many years!"

"Come!" said Mr. Danvers, kindly. "Come with us! I shan't forget what you have done for my boy. I'll put you in a position where you can do far more for your brother than you can by staying here."

And, Belle yielding at last, they all left the house together. No one paid any attention to them as they went out by the basement door.

333 then took charge and hurried them over to Sixth avenue, where they boarded the elevated cars. As they rode on uptown Mr. Danvers questioned Belle about her past, but the girl was very reticent and he could not get much out of her.

"Where are you taking me to?" she asked. "I think you had better let me go."

"You are at perfect liberty to do as you please," replied Mr. Danvers. "You can go home with me if you like, and I will see you kindly cared for, or—"

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" broke in Belle. "All I want is a chance to earn an honest living. Give me enough to pay for a night's lodging and I will leave you at the next station. It is better so."

At the next station Belle left the train with \$50 of Mr. Danvers' money in her pocket, and it was a long time before the messenger boy saw her again. They left the car at Fiftieth street and walked over to Fifth avenue. Mr. Danvers stopped at one of the finest mansions on the avenue, and mounting the steps, opened the door with a latchkey.

"Do I leave you here?" asked 333. "I've seen you safe to your house, and now—"

"Leave me! Never again must you leave me, my dear boy!" exclaimed the banker. "Walk right in, Reginald Dewar! From this day forth this is your home!"

CHAPTER XXI.—Mr. Babcock Tries a Bold Game.

It transformed Messenger Boy No. 333 into Mr. Reginald Dewar, the recognized heir to old John Danvers, the multi-millionaire, and it was all

done so quietly that very few knew how it came about. Of course, Mr. Wilkie had to be informed. He was the first to congratulate Reginald.

"I always knew you'd turn out to be somebody, my boy," he said, shaking 333's hand, warmly. "I'm sure I rejoice in your good fortune. You were always faithful in your work and you richly deserve it, but don't get the big head, and don't forget your old friends."

One of the first things he did was to persuade his grandfather to take Danny O'Neil into the bank as a messenger, at good pay.

Detective Joe Nedwell landed Tom and Garry in the stationhouse all right, but Curtis escaped. The two mysterious houses were thoroughly overhauled and rented to other parties. It was said that they belonged to an ex-alderman who was entirely aware of the character of his tenants. Whether this was true or not we cannot say, but certain it is the captured green-goods men found no difficulty in getting bail and the ex-alderman was the man who went on their bond. Detective Joe Nedwell, with a thousand dollars of Mr. Danvers' money in his pocket, went back to New Orleans, expecting to be called to New York any day to appear against the captured green-goods men, but he never was, for the case never came to trial. Meanwhile, Reginald—we propose to drop 333—had become quite at home in the great house on the avenue. If he felt any doubts as to his identity, Mr. Danvers had none, for he immediately made a new will under which every dollar of his wealth was bequeathed to his grandson. The next thing was to complete the boy's education. Mr. Danvers was greatly surprised to find how much he knew already, thanks to the night school and the boy's diligence. Indeed, Reginald was surprised at himself when he finally brought up in one of the junior classes at Columbia College. One morning, late in October, a little more than a year after our hero's lucky day, Mr. Danvers sent for Reginald to come to his room, at a little after eight o'clock.

"Reg," he said, "I'm not feeling well this morning. I wish you'd take these papers to the bank and tell Mr. Whitehouse that I shan't come downtown until to-morrow. If he has anything to send me in return tell him you'll call for it at four o'clock. You'll have to get off from college early, but it can't be helped."

Reginald lost no time in attending to his errand, for there were important classes on that day, and he did not like to miss them. Still he found time to run into the old office and say a word to Mr. Wilkie, who was glad to see him, as he always was.

"By the way 333," said the manager—he could not seem to get hold of the new name—"I suppose you know that your old friend, Mr. Babcock, failed last week. A miserable business. He is utterly ruined and a lot of unfortunate people have been dragged down with him. That's the way it goes down here on the Street."

Reginald was not much surprised. Still he was sorry, for he could not forget the broker's liberality to him in the past.

Reginald then started up Broadway, intending to take the elevated at the City Hall, and, as

luck would have it, ran right into Mr. Babcock at the corner of Fulton street.

"Great Scott! Why, is it you, 333?" he exclaimed. "By gracious, I'm glad to see you! I suppose you've heard about my trouble. It's a bad affair, but there's hope yet. Get in here with me. I'm going right uptown. I want to tell you all about it. I always thought a lot of you, 333."

Reginald did not like to refuse, so he yielded, and they drove off up Broadway, Mr. Babcock rattling on about his troubles as they rode along.

"Remember that thousand dollars I gave you, 333?" he suddenly exclaimed, when they were up somewhere around Grand street.

"Indeed I do, sir," replied Reginald, guessing what was coming next.

"Of course I meant it as a gift," continued the broker, "and I wouldn't have you think otherwise, but if you could persuade your grandfather to cash my note for that amount it would help me on my feet again. Only as a loan, mind you. I'll pay it back inside of a month."

"You can consider it done," replied Reginald, promptly. "I've got that much money myself. I don't have to bother Mr. Danvers at all."

"I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you, 333," said the broker, in a confused way, just as though he had fully expected to be refused. "It will help me very much, and—by Jove! look there! Don't you remember that fellow? Yes, you surely do!"

He put his arm around Reginald's neck and pointed excitedly to the sidewalk. Of course, the boy looked. Who would not have done so? Instantly Mr. Babcock drew his arm tight around Reginald's throat and forced him back against the cushions.

"No thousand dollars will satisfy me, 333!" he hissed, thrusting a small bottle into the boy's mouth and turning its contents down his throat. "I'm out for bigger game than that!"

CHAPTER XXII.—That Dastardly Plot.

It was no use. Struggle against it as he would, Reginald's brain yielded to the deadly drug. Mr. Babcock held him firmly a prisoner until he was entirely unconscious and then laid him back against the seat, pulled down the curtain at the windows of the coupe and drew a long breath.

"It's a blame shame!" he muttered, looking at the boy. "Upon my word, it is a blame shame to have to do it. If ever there was a good, honest fellow it is 333."

Shrewd and sharp always, his shrewdness was now being used for evil purposes; still he had a kind heart at the bottom of it all and he could not help feeling downright sorry for his old friend, the messenger boy, when he saw him lying there so white and still. The expression of his face seemed to disturb Mr. Babcock greatly. The broker's conscience was reproaching him. He took a drink from a handsome silver-mounted "pocket pistol" and lighted a fresh cigar and the coupe drove on, stopping at last in front of a noted sporting man's hotel on Fourth avenue.

The driver pulled up at the curb, but Mr. Babcock did not get out. He raised the curtain slightly and sat waiting. In a few moments a

man wearing a slouch hat and a heavy beard came hurriedly out of the hotel and approached the coupe. The door was thrown open and he sprang in without a word. Then they went flying uptown again.

"Well, Babcock, so you managed to get him," remarked the man, with a chuckle, as he raised the handkerchief for an instant and looked at the face beneath it.

"Yes," replied the broker, shortly.

"Have any trouble?"

"None at all, because he trusted me. You couldn't have done it. That boy is as sharp as a needle. I wish to heaven it was anybody else who stood between us and success, Mellen. I confess I don't like my part of this job."

"Hush! Don't call me by that name. Suppose he was to hear?"

"No danger. He's thoroughly knocked out. Go on with your talk. What's to be done?"

"What's to be done? Why, the boy is to be removed from my path and I'm to pay for it. You are to stand by me and I'm to put you on your feet again, financially, as soon as I come into my uncle's money. I thought I had made it all plain."

Mr. Babcock puffed away at his cigar and did not reply. "You don't make any answer," replied Mellen. "If you don't fully understand I had better go over the ground again. If this boy dies and John Danvers dies his will, as it now stands, becomes worthless and I am the legal heir to his millions. Is it a stake worth working for or isn't it? I say it is."

"I suppose it is," growled Babcock. "But where do I come in on all this?"

"You act for me from the moment my uncle dies. It may take a year to fix it so that I can appear openly in New York with safety. You will have to compromise with the bank people and make them agree not to prosecute. They'll do it when they know that I am John Danvers' heir. The money I took is to be repaid in full just as soon as I come into my own."

"A great scheme," said Mr. Babcock, still puffing away, "but suppose Mr. Danvers should take it into his head to live a while longer, in spite of his age?"

"He won't," replied Mellen, coolly. "He's in the act of dying now."

There was a sudden movement under the handkerchief. Mellen snatched it off the boy's face with a smothered imprecation. Reginald looked just the same, however. His eyes were closed, his lips had fallen apart and he was breathing heavily.

"I'd stick a knife into him right now if I thought he was shamming!" hissed Mellen. "But I guess he's not."

"I'll vouch for it he's not," replied Babcock. "He got a full dose of the best knockout drops I could lay my hands on. He's good for an hour yet. Explain what you mean."

"Why I mean just this: There is a new man servant in John Danvers' house; that man is his personal attendant, valet if you have a mind to call him so. Yesterday my uncle was ailing. To-day he is downright sick. To-morrow I look for him to be worse. By this day week I expect—"

"Well? Why do you pause?"

"I was going to add his funeral, but perhaps it is just as well not to say too much."

"I understand you. What's my price?"

"Half a million."

"I expected it. Well, I'll give it. On the day I come into John Danvers' fortune half a million is yours, but it can't be done in writing now."

"I suppose not. I wish it could. Is this where we stop?"

"It is. Now to get the boy out. This is his last day on earth. To-night his dead body goes into the river and don't you trouble yourself with an idea that it will ever come to the surface. Out with you. I'll attend to the rest."

Mr Babcock got out hastily. There were few people in sight. The neighborhood was given up to factories and lumber yards. In fact, this house was the only dwelling on the block.

"Go right in the basement way. I'll follow with the boy," said Mellen.

It was a bold game to play in broad daylight, but Mellen was a man of wide experience. He knew that it is the bold game that succeeds. Evidently the man on the box understood his business, for he instantly drove off. Perhaps if Reginald had been able to get a look at him then he could have recognized his old acquaintance, Mr. "Curtis," alias "Oliver," for it was certainly no one else.

"Now we've got him!" chuckled Mellen, letting the boy fall upon the hall floor. "Shut the door, Babcock, and be sure that you lock it. The game is in our hands."

CHAPTER XXIII.—Belle to the Front Once More

Mr. Babcock lost no time in locking the door, and as soon as it was accomplished he assisted James Mellen to carry the messenger boy upstairs and into a small hall bedroom where he was thrown down upon a dirty bed.

"Here's where he sees his finish," declared Mellen. "Reginald Dewar, my dearly beloved cousin, you will never leave this room alive."

"Can't it be fixed otherwise?" asked Mr. Babcock, with shudder. "I think I could arrange it to have the boy shipped off to Australia or some other point. If he ever turned again we would simply have to deny that we ever saw him before and to treat him as an impostor. It is easily done."

"No, no! Not on your life! We must take no such chances. Leave him alone. He will die a painless death. See that tube projecting out of the wall there?"

"I do!" shuddered the broker. "Well?"

"Well, it is connected with the gas meter—that's all."

"And you propose to turn on the gas?"

"I do. Come on. This room is gas tight. Inside of twenty minutes that boy will cease to live."

"I wish it could be done otherwise," shuddered Babcock.

They withdrew then and the door was closed and locked. Reginald lay still on the bed. Mr. Babcock's antidote had not revived him; his life was now hanging by a thread, and yet, strange to say, the boy had heard every word of the wicked plot which had been discussed in his presence. The antidote had done just that for him and no more. It had restored the messenger boy's senses, but it had given him no control whatever over his limbs. And this made the situation even more terrible. Reginald had heard every word. He was entirely aware of Mr. Danvers' danger as

well as his own. For himself he scarcely thought, but it drove him almost mad to think of his grandfather being slowly poisoned by the man, John Cook, who had been engaged through an advertisement a month before.

From the first Reginald had distributed this fellow. He knew now how well founded this distrust was, but what could he do? In vain he struggled and tried to throw off the force of the drug. He could do nothing, however. He could not even open his eyes, and he tried to do so with all the force of his will, for something new had happened now. There was somebody moving about the room. He could hear distinctly. There was certainly some one near him and yet he knew that the door had been locked. Reginald made one more mighty effort and succeeded. His eyes opened. Daylight came through the cracks of the blinds and he could distinctly see a woman standing over by the wall. She was stuffing her pocket handkerchief into the opening of the projecting tube.

"Belle!" gasped Reginald.

The girl turned on him with a startled cry.

"333!" she breathed. "Thank heaven! He has not killed you! Quick! Up! Escape from this house while there is yet time! They have turned the gas on already, but they never guessed that I saw them coming and hid under the bed to save you. Oh, why don't you get up? Why don't you do as I say?"

It was Belle Brown and no one else. Most fortunate was it for Reginald that she had not abandoned her brother a year before, as he urged her to do.

"I can't get up! I can't move an inch!" gasped the boy. "But if you can get me out of this house I'd do anything for you that you may ask. Anything! Do you hear?"

"333, I want no reward if I can save you," replied Belle, almost sternly, "but what can I do? This window is securely nailed, the door is fastened on the outside. The handkerchief which I have stuffed in the gaspipe may keep us alive for a while, but it cannot be for long; to me it looks very much as if we should have to die together, unless you can get off that bed and lend me a helping hand."

The words were scarcely spoken when a key was heard grating in the lock.

"We are lost!" gasped Belle, wringing her hands in agony. "It is Mr. Mellen. He is coming to see why the gas will not work."

Once more Reginald made a mighty effort to spring up from the bed, but once more he failed.

"If he kills you he must kill me first!" cried Belle, throwing herself in front of the boy as the door went flying back.

CHAPTER XXIV.—Conclusion.

"333! Oh, 333!"

It was Mr. Babcock and not James Mellen, who came stumbling into the room. The broker was pretty drunk now and he called out to Reginald as the door flew open, but he started back when he saw Belle.

"Who the mischief are you?" he gasped.

"A friend to this poor boy," replied the girl, firmly. "Don't dare to touch him! I'm desperate! This crime shall not be committed while I live."

"Oh, Mr. Babcock, have mercy on me!" said Reginald, faintly. "I stood your friend when—"

"Yes, and I'm going to stand yours now," broke in the broker, thickly. "That's why I'm here, 333. I couldn't bring myself to do it. That cousin of yours has gone out for a moment. Now is your time. Drink this. It will put you on your feet. No, no, girl. Don't you touch it. This is for 333."

"He shan't drink it! He shan't! You are trying to poison him!" she cried.

But Babcock was too much for her. Catching her by the throat he threw her roughly to one side.

"It's only the antidote, you fool!" he hissed. "Who are you, anyhow? How did you come here? Drink it, 333."

Reginald took the bottle and drank off its contents. The effect was immediate. In an instant the boy's strength returned to him and he sprang off the bed.

"Thank heaven!" gasped Belle. "Oh, sir, I have wronged you. This boy is my only friend and—"

"And so is he mine," broke in the broker. "I suppose you are Jack Brown's sister, but I don't care who you are. Come, 333."

"Not without Belle!" cried the messenger boy. "You won't refuse me this time. You will go with me!"

"I must. My brother will kill me for this," replied Belle, sadly. "I give him up at last. I'm in your hands, 333."

"And I'm going, too," said Babcock. "I may be a drunkard, but I'm no murderer. You don't know what you have escaped, 333, but I just couldn't do it. When you come to think of me let it be as kindly as you can."

He led the way out of the house and hurried them around into Eleventh avenue. The spot where he left them was the identical place where Belle had met them in the cab that memorable night, now more than two years before.

"Good-by, 333," he said. "I am going to leave New York to-day. You will never see me again. As I said before, try to think as kindly of me as you can."

He offered Reginald his hand and the boy did not hesitate to take it. A moment more and he was gone, but Belle did not leave Reginald until they reached the corner of Broadway and Fifty-ninth street.

"Here is an address where I can be heard from," she said, handing him a scrap of paper with a number scrawled upon it. "Let me know how it all ends."

Reginald promised and she left him. Instead of going directly home the boy hurried to the police station in which precinct Mr. Danvers' house was situated. Here, as it happened, he was well known, having often taken messages there in former years. From the station he went to the house with all possible speed. Opening the door with his latch-key, he flew upstairs two steps at a time to his grandfather's room. Without stopping to knock he burst into the room just in time to see the man Cook in the act of handing Mr. Danvers a glass of wine.

"Why, Reg! What's the matter?" demanded

the old gentleman as Reginald snatched the glass away from the treacherous valet.

"The matter is that this wretch is trying to poison you!" cried Reginald.

Before he could utter another word, Cook sprang out of the room and went dashing down the stairs.

"Stop him! Whose work is this?" gasped the millionaire.

"James Mellen's work!" cried Reginald. "He can't get out, grandfather. The police are at the door. Thank heaven I was in time to save you from this dose, which might have laid you in your grave."

And out of the room Reginald went dashing. When he gained the lower hall there was Cook struggling in the hands of two policemen.

"Hold him! That's the scoundrel!" cried Reginald. "I charge him with attempted murder. Don't let him escape."

He need not have spoken, for his old acquaintance, the sergeant from the station, came in through the door just then.

Escape for the prisoner was impossible, and with his arrest the troubles of our hero came to an end. The wine, upon being analyzed, was found to contain a large quantity of arsenic. Later the man Cook confessed that he had been hired by James Mellen to take the situation and poison Mr. Danvers. This confession came after Mellen's arrest. There was no trial, however. Mr. Danvers did not press the charge and later Mellen went to Sing Sing on the old charge of embezzlement from the Twentieth National Bank. From that day forward Mr. Babcock was never heard of. It is believed by many of his former friends that he went to South America. Belle Brown was liberally provided for by Mr. Danvers, who speedily recovered his health. The old banker settled a sum of money upon the deserving girl and aided her to go to the far West, where she is now living, earnest in her work as a hospital nurse.

Just one year ago Mr. Danvers died and to-day Reginald Dewar is one of New York's rising millionaires.

Next week's issue will contain "JOE JECKEL, THE PRINCE OF FIREMEN."

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AL, THE ATHLETE, OR, THE CHAMPION OF THE CLUB

By R. T. BENNETT

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XXIV.

Conclusion.

"Oh, my! How complimentary!" she laughed, as she seated herself in the stern sheets. "All ready, captain! Give way at the oars!"

Al rowed slowly, and as the boat crept along under the shade of the trees he saw Jennie looking at him intently, and he asked her:

"What's the question that is troubling your mind?"

"Papa won't tell me anything about your raid on the Drews and that dreadful tramp Scotty. I was just wondering whether you would be more generous and tell me all about what happened."

"I don't see any reason why I shouldn't, Jennie," answered Al. "Just name the facts you wish to get posted on, and I will answer as best I can."

"Well, how about the arrest of William Drew and Scotty?"

"Nothing to it," replied Al. "Fox and I were at the window of Digman's tavern. The detective aimed a pistol at the pair, and I climbed inside and handcuffed them together. They were lugged off to jail. At the hearing they were held for the grand jury without bail. Scotty turned States evidence, and swore that William Drew gave him money to steal Bud from your parents. He went on to say that Mrs. Drew, who lived apart from her husband in New York, was given charge of the boy and she reared him until Scotty stole Bud from her. He wanted to blackmail the mill-owner with the little fellow, when we boys got Bud from the tramps."

"I see!" nodded Jennie. "Go on, Al!"

"Well," resumed the boy, "in addition to that Scotty admitted that the burglar who robbed your house was Jim Drew."

"Good! Good!"

"Jim was arrested, too."

"Then the police have the whole Drew family?"

"Not Jim's mother. She gave testimony against her husband which corroborated what Scotty said. That clinched the prosecution against the mill-owner, and he was remanded for sentence."

"And Scotty?"

"He was sent up for ten years."

"Did papa prosecute Jim Drew for robbing him?"

"He did, and the thief is already sentenced, and I have been vindicated of the charge. Your father appeared against him merely to make sure that I was entirely cleared of the charge of burglary."

"Then I am glad he did it."

"Do you want to hurry back?" asked Al.

"Not particularly."

"Then I had better slacken the skiff's speed," laughed Al, as he rose and took a seat beside her.

"Isn't this delightful?" she asked, as she gazed at the blue sky and listened to the rippling of the water beside the boat.

"It's dangerous to become entranced with the scenery."

"Why?" she asked, innocently.

"Because you might fall out of the boat."

"I ain't afraid while you are with me."

"As a safeguard against it, I had better support you," said Al, and he slipped his arm around her slender waist.

She made a pretense of making him take it away, but her effort was not very strong, and she suddenly ceased the attempt altogether.

"Comfortable?" he asked in low tones.

"Not entirely."

"Want a head rest?"

"I don't mind."

And over went her pretty head upon his shoulder.

He held her dainty little hand in his, and, bending closer to her, he told her how much he thought of her, as the boat drifted along with the current, and she seemed to like to hear it, too.

By the time the skiff reached the foot of her father's grounds he was saying to her in low earnest tones:

"We are only a boy and girl yet, Jennie, but we are getting older all the time. It won't be many years from now before we shall be at an age to think of marrying. And when that time comes, can I rely on you to——"

But just then Mr. Harlow suddenly appeared among the trees.

Jennie saw him, and, straightening up, she pushed Al's arm away and gasped:

"There's papa!"

Al saw the old gentleman now and bowed to him.

Seizing an oar, he steered the boat ashore.

"Your answer, Jennie!" he whispered, eagerly.

"Yes!"

And the next moment she sped away to meet her father, while Al, one of the happiest fellows on earth, picked up his oars, doffed his cap to her and rowed away in the gathering twilight.

On the following day William Drew was sentenced to a long term in prison, and his wife disappeared from Midwood.

The work on Mr. Adams' handsome mansion went on for a long time, but it was finally finished, and Al's family moved into it.

And as they were next-door neighbors of the Harlow family, Al and his sweetheart were often together.

Al did not give up the Athletic Club; on the contrary, he got his rich father to fit it up with everything the boys needed, and they now have one of the finest gymnasiums in the country.

And there, under Al's tuition, Bud finally developed into a strong, healthy boy, and stood at the front rank in all the contests that followed.

It is almost needless to add that when Al and

Jennie arrive at a suitable age they will get married.

And so we will leave them, happy, contented and at peace with all the world.

The End.

A NEW SERIAL COMMENCES NEXT WEEK

DEADSHOT DICK, THE BOY RIFLE KING

—OR—

A TENDERFOOT AMONG THE COWBOYS

By R. T. Bennett

A FINE STORY FOR THE BOYS. READ IT!

NEXT WEEK

140-YEAR-OLD CLOCK RUNS

A clock that was ticking off the seconds when George Washington was President, is still keeping accurate time in the home of W. F. Arms, of Malad. The clock, according to a recent check-up in its life history, has been running for over 140 years. It was built in Switzerland and all the wheels except one are of wood.

One New Jersey realty development corporation interested in Monmouth County property had decided to use aeroplanes to show the prospective buyers "how the land lays."

"Take your client up in the air," says this developer, "and he can see more in five minutes than he can in five days on land, and he has learned more about the property than he could in hours of talking and pouring over maps, literature and pictures."

GOOD LOCK URGED AS CAR EQUIPMENT

A secure lock should be a part of every car's equipment if it is to be parked often. When planning to park an automobile alongside of a curb it is essential not to get too close to the car ahead when stopping or when starting up again. Leave a couple of feet if possible.

The car ahead will be less liable to back into it when pulling out, and thus dented fenders may be avoided. If a driver parks right up against the car ahead and another car parks close to the rear of his machine, there will always be trouble when getting the car out.

There will be no space left for either backing or going ahead.

HOME OWNER ELIMINATES LOSS FROM MOVING

Those of you who complain about your rent, about having to move every two or three years because the landlord "won't fix up the place" or sells it "out from under you" consider this fact: The rent the home owner pays never goes up! Whether you own your home free of debt or are acquiring it under contract payments the charges you must

pay per month are definitely fixed through the period of your possession. No one can compel you to pay more, nor can you be compelled to move elsewhere to seek lower rents.

It seems that those who rent oftentimes fail to take into consideration this important fact. It is one of the reasons why the family committed to a program of home ownership begins to make headway from the moment it fits itself to such a program. Then the losses through continued moving are eliminated. The old adage that "three moves are as good as a fire" is certainly close to literal truth, as every renting family knows.

KISS IN THE DARK GETS FRENCHMAN OUT OF JAIL

A kiss in the dark got a Frenchman out of prison the other day.

The prisoner, Fritz Gabril, had been behind the bars two years and had several more to serve. His wife came to see him. At the leave taking in the dark corridor Gabril and his wife embraced with especial warmth, the parting kiss being so movie-like that the guards noticed it and were moved.

Gabril had a slip of paper in his cheek. It passed his wife's lips during the embrace. On the paper was written:

"Tomorrow, during the recreation hour, I will jump over the wall. Have a vehicle waiting for me on the other side of the road."

Mrs. Gabril had the vehicle. Her husband got away and hasn't been heard of since. She was detained by the authorities.

DURABILITY MAIN FACTOR IN CHOICE IN ROOFING HOME

Many miles away, as one approaches a town, we note how conspicuous are the roofs and church spires against an almost solid blue-green background.

Most of us recall the days when these roofs were hardly without exception of natural blue-gray slate, suggestive of the ruggedness our forefathers observed when designing and building their homes. These roofs endured years with no attention whatsoever. When once applied they were entirely forgotten.

These houses were built in a period of good, sound construction and these very buildings are standing to-day with their original roofs, beautiful in their quaint staunchness.

In some communities vivid penetrating color later found its way both in natural slate and in manufactured roofing materials. A choice of every known shade became available to appease the public taste, often with the result that the less scrupulous builder was tempted to give color, but, unfortunately, disregard quality.

However, the fallacy of such practice is now being felt. The annoyance and expense of upkeep has injected much seriousness in the thoughts of the home owner or buyer.

Thus we are back where we started—and a bit wiser. Color is desirable, it is true, but if durability must be sacrificed to attain it, it is scarcely worth while. After all, the great strength and sturdiness of a roof imparts a keen sense of subtle beauty.

Put on a roof that does its duty—sheds water, and stays where it is put without further attention and add color if obtainable economically.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, AUGUST 10, 1927

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

FIGHTING "GAS" TAX

The 3-cent gasoline tax, now imposed on motorists in Michigan, has aroused strong feeling in Detroit, where the Council and the Detroit Automobile Club are circulating petitions for a referendum.

VIBRATION HELD RUINOUS TO CAR

The most punishment a car can receive is to drive over a road of constant roughness and at a speed which causes the bumping of the vehicle to match the period of vibration of the springs. Constant vibrations are worse than occasional wrenchings. Vibration will work havoc with everything on the car and is one of the most severe factory tests for machines.

BIG TRAFFIC JAM ON QUEENSBORO BRIDGE

Crossing of Queensboro Bridge by 100,000 automobiles on each day, July 2 and 3, according to the police report, emphasizes the necessity and value of the proposed triborough bridge.

Committees of the Queensboro and Brooklyn Chambers of Commerce conferred last week with Elmer F. Andrews, engineer of the Highways and Bridges Bureau, strongly recommending an express highway between Brooklyn and Long Island City to link with the proposed bridge over Hell Gate and the Harlem River into Manhattan and Bronx.

BANKERS IN FAVOR OF GASOLINE TAXES

Advocacy of the tax on gasoline as "the most scientific form of motor vehicle taxation" was expressed by the commerce and marine commission of the American Bankers' Association at the annual meeting of the association's executive council in Hot Springs, Ark. Pointing out that the automotive industry now ranks first in our national industries, the report states that the motor truck is meeting "a real public need in providing quick, flexible service for distances from thirty to sixty miles."

SAFE AND SANE CAR DRIVING

Just as long as the automobile driver persists in abusing rather than using the safety devices with which his car is equipped, gruesome tales of highway catastrophes will continue to occupy headline space in the daily papers. Impressed with the claims made for his braking system, his bumpers, his warning signal, along the road he speeds with little thought to the fact that despite the mechanical excellence of such devices, intelligence is requisite in enabling them to perform their proper functions.

How often, for example, does the driver sound his horn mechanically and drive ahead with no further thought to the safety of others, to say nothing of his own good health. Then, when haled into court for violating the rules of safe and sane driving he is heard to proclaim defensively, "But I blew my horn!"

If it so happened that he were obliged to operate his machine without such safety features, the chances are he would take fewer risks.

LAUGHS

"Papa, what is an agnostic?" "An agnostic, my son, is a person who can't see beyond his, knows."

"Oh, my dear," said the minister to six-year-old Alice, "so you are the oldest of the family?" "Oh, no," said she solemnly, "my father and mother are older'n I am."

He—I can't decide whether to go in for painting or poetry. She—I'd go in for painting if I were you. He—Then you've seen some of my painting? She—Oh, no; but I've heard some of your poetry!

"Many of our girls marry well," said the manager to the new assistant. "A millionaire just married a girl in our fur department. Settled \$250,000 on her, too." "Dear me! And here I am at the bargain counter!"

"Why do you keep staring at my hat, dear?" asked the caller of the hostess' little daughter. "Well, mother said it was a perfect fright," said the youngster, "and I was waitin' to see if it would scare me, but it don't."

"Who knows what the Epistles are?" asked the Sunday-school teacher of her class of small girls. Dorothy's hand waved violently. "Well, Dorothy?" said the teacher. "The Epistles," said Dorothy, "were the lady Apostles."

She was descending the stairs at a church so-cial when a man behind her trod upon her gown. "You clumsy brute!" she exclaimed, suddenly wheeling around upon him, and then added sweetly: "Oh, I beg your pardon; I thought you were my husband."

"What a narrow street that is!" said the visitor being shown about the suburban town by a citizen. "Yes, it's narrow," replied the citizen. "And in wretched condition. See the holes in the pavement." "Yes, it looks bad." "And dirty everywhere. What is the name of that street?" "That's Grant street."

The Black Satchel

The news was in everybody's mouth. It flew fast, as bad news always does. Mercantile pharisees, in all their pride of solvency, stood at the street corners and thanked heaven that they were not as he.

"Pride must have a fall," moralized the moralizers. "Giles Gregory held his head altogether too high!"

"I'll have the rascal arrested!" cried Eben Nabcoin, the money-lender, who had "done a bill" for Mr. Gregory the day before.

"What a pity for Mr. Smugg," everybody said. "He's such a nice young man, and now he's thrown out of employment."

Mr. Smugg, in whom so much sympathy centered, was Mr. Gregory's head clerk and business manager.

The hapless merchant's protest that the blow had fallen unforeseen of course passed for nothing with the keen Mr. Nabcoin. That Mr. Gregory had gotten him to discount a bill the very day before his failure, to the distrustful mind of Eben was conclusive proof of fraud, and as soon as Fleece Bros., his attorneys, could prepare the requisite papers, he had the delinquent debtor arrested and sent to jail.

Leaving him there for the present, and his motherless daughter, Alice, to grieve over his misfortune, let us follow for a little Ernest Gray, who had long loved Alice as well—well, as well as she loved him.

Alice's father disapproved the young man's suit. He had higher aims for his daughter than a match with one whose position was yet to be won, and Ernest Gray was too proud a youth to press his claim, when pelf, not love, might be thought to be his motive. He had gone to seek his fortune in a distant city, whence, after a time, seeing a chance of bettering his prospects in a foreign land, with a heart as staunch as the good ship that bore him, he sailed away, hoping to return one day and claim the treasure left behind.

In mid-ocean a great storm arose. Nobly the stout ship fought against it, and for days held her own.

At last a leak was sprung, which increased at every motion of the laboring vessel. Passengers and crew took turns at the pumps with the energy of men struggling for life, but still the water gained.

"Lower the boats!" shouted the gallant captain, when at last it became apparent that the only choice lay between the slender hope thus afforded and going down with the sinking ship.

The command was obeyed, and none too soon, for the last off the frail craft barely escaped being drawn into the vortex caused by the doomed vessel as she disappeared beneath the surging billows.

Ernest Gray found himself in the small boat, with two companions—one of them Caleb Smuggs, who, too, had chanced to be a passenger on the ill-fated ship. He alone had thought of saving his effects. He held a black leather satchel in his hand, to which he hung tenaciously through the whole exciting turmoil.

There had been no time to secure water or provisions. The only chance of life lay in the boat outriding the storm and rescue by some passing vessel before death came through starvation.

Days and nights passed, but no help came. Ernest Gray and Caleb Smugg was fast succumbing to it.

Ernest was the stronger of the two, and kept his eye steadily on that of the starving wretch, who soon quailed under his look like a subdued animal. He sank back in the boat, and the pallor of death began to settle on his face.

"I have something to tell you before you die," he gasped.

Ernest leaned over him, for his words were scarcely audible.

The dying man continued in murmuring tones. Intense astonishment was pictured on Ernest's face as the poor wretch breathed his last.

A sail hove in sight at that moment. Ernest signalled it and was seen and rescued.

* * * *

The beauty of Alice Gregory had more than once caused a flutter in the little heart that Eben Nabcoin had. He ventured to tell her so on one occasion, but the avowal was met with scorn. Maybe it was because he felt the flutter still; maybe it was for vengeance sake. At any rate Eben came one day to see the afflicted daughter of him whom he had cast into prison.

"It is in your power to set your father free," he said.

A gleam of joy for an instant lit up the girl's wan features. Then a half-terrified expression succeeded.

"How—how may I do it?" she faltered.

"By becoming my wife," was the cold, relentless answer.

"My father would scorn to accept his liberty at such a price," she said, "even if I were base enough to offer it."

A spectator came upon the scene unobserved. As Alice turned her back upon the man she loathed her eyes fell upon Ernest Gray.

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest, I'm so glad you have come!" she exclaimed. "This man has not only thrown my father into prison, but now adds the insult of asking me to be his—"

She could not speak his word.

"That," I presume, is the price asked for your father's liberty?" said Ernest.

"I have so put it," spoke up Eben, with easy assurance.

"Maybe there is another price you would accept," replied Ernest, with equal coolness.

"I have named the only one."

"Not the money due you?" Ernest asked.

"Oh, if you are able to pay that," said Eben with a sarcastic grin.

"Mr. Gregory is," Ernest interrupted. In a few words he told the story of his shipwreck, concluding thus: "With his dying breath Caleb Smuggs confessed that he had plundered his employer for years, and that it was the sums thus abstracted, which he had artfully concealed by false book-keeping, and not any real losses, which caused Mr. Gregory's failure. The fruit of his dishonesty Caleb, who was a very prudent man, carefully hoarded; and in this satchel which he

gave me will be found every cent of the stolen money. It belongs to Mr. Gregory, and is more than enough to pay all he owes and set him going again."

So Mr. Nabcoin got his money, Giles Gregory his liberty, and Ernest Gray is now the latter's son-in-law and junior partner.

"Well, take that other chair," said he, "and draw up and have something. Here, just let me ring for another glass and pipe."

After we'd drank a little, and I'd taken a pull or two at the pipe, I suddenly turned to him.

"Creigg, I believe I've found out something."

"And what may it be?"

"I've matched a piece of paper," said I.

"The deuce you have!" said he, with a little laugh, and still pulling away at his pipe. "Well, For," he continued, after a moment or two, "I really shouldn't wonder if you made a stir in the world yet—before you die."

"Stranger things than that have happened," said I, taking my pipe in my left hand, and, at the same time holding up a bond, from the top edge of which the merest fragment had been torn. "Do you see that?"

"Yes, what of it?" he asked, without taking the trouble to remove his pipe.

"Why—nothing," said I, "only I took that, with \$67,000 worth more and a number of things belonging to you, from under the flooring in your room while you were drunk last night, and the missing fragment of this bond was taken from the hand of Walter Whitelock the morning he was found dead on the floor of his private room."

Creigg's careless indifference was all gone now.

His face grew as pale as any corpse.

"What—what are you going to do?" he asked.

"Isn't that a rather useless question?" said I.

"Will you take \$10,000 to let me off?"

"It's too late, Mr. Creigg," said I, "there's half a dozen officers 'round this room, and 'twon't do to have any fooling."

Well, in a word, he wilted—gave right up—submitted peacefully as a lamb.

Told me all about it afterward.

Got into a tight box. Saw his way out of it by robbing Whitelock. Opportunity offered. Fixed the window while he was there in the early part of the evening. Got in after the house was quiet. Managed to get the safe open, and was just looking over the bonds when he was surprised by Whitelock.

From the time he knew that his employer was in the room to the time he knew he himself was a murderer, seemed no more than a single instant.

The ready money he had found in the safe and on Whitelock's person had tided him over his tight place; but the bonds he dared not use, although he had most cunningly altered their numbers.

He might have managed everything, but that fragment fixed him.

Well, we got him back here, and brought Walker along as witness.

As I have already said, Walker was an Englishman, and had only gone back to his native country because he found it hard work to get employment here after the murder.

The trial came off in due course, and Creigg was executed, and, to my mind, he richly deserved his fate.

\$250,000 DRUG CACHE SEIZED IN RAID

Captain Henry Scherb and Sergeant Christis of the Narcotic Squad searched the home of Harry Watkins at 26 Battery Avenue, Brooklyn recently, and seized 695 ounce bottles which they said contained morphine, and 7,900 bottles believed to contain heroin. Captain Scherb said that the value of the drugs was about \$75,000, but that if sold to addicts it would bring at least \$250,000 and probably more, depending upon the extent to which it was adulterated with sugar and powder and so increased in bulk.

Watkins and his wife, Mrs. Anna Watkins, were arrested, the latter at the house and the former at a printing office in 441 Pearl Street, where he is employed as a stereotyper. A three-months-old baby was turned over to neighbors to care for when the Watkinses were taken to the Fort Hamilton police station and locked up.

Both Watkins and his wife said they knew nothing of the drugs, which were packed in clothing boxes and wooden cases. They said that last January a friend had brought the cases to them and asked them for storage room and that they had put them in a closet beneath the stairs, where the police found them. The police, however, believe the house has been a distributing point for drug peddlers, although no addicts were served there.

Captain Scherb said that for a long time they had received reports that drug peddlers had been supplied from a point in Brooklyn, and later they heard that the supplies were stored in the Battery Avenue place.

For more than a week detectives watched the house, but during that time no one entered except Watkins and his wife. Nevertheless the police felt certain that drug peddlers were being supplied from the house, and recently they determined to search the building. Mrs. Watkins came to the door with her baby in her arms when they knocked and made no objection when they went in.

The police had been apprised of the exact location of the cases and boxes containing the small vials, and went straight to the stairway. Captain Scherb said the raid was the largest in recent months, and that he confidently expected that other members of the gang would soon be found. Detectives are investigating on the theory that the narcotics were smuggled into this country by members of ships' crews.

PERMITS ONLY SUBJECTS TO MAKE FILMS

That British stories were placed in false atmospheres by American film producers was charged in the committee of the House of Commons considering the film bill, when by a vote of 15 to 5 an amendment was adopted requiring the producer as well as the author of a film produced in this country to be a British subject.

The amendment was offered by Harry Day, a Laborite and theatrical producer, who complained that Tess in Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" was made to look "more or less like a night club queen" by an American producer, while Peter in "Peter Pan" when he was supposed to shout for the King was made to shout for George Washington.

TIMELY TOPICS

300,000 LISTENERS IN JAPAN

The popularity of radio as a medium of entertainment in Japan is not far behind other civilized nations. Each owner of a radio receiver is required to take out a receiving license, at 2 shillings a month, and at the present time over 300,000 persons hold licenses.

SKIDDING ON OILED HIGHWAY

Highway oiling is at hand in many sections of the country. This type of road surface presents a special hazard to the motorist and requires great care in driving if one is to avoid a dangerous skid. Front-wheel skidding, the most dangerous variety, is more common on the oiled highway than on any other, and it is responsible for many of the serious accidents that occur on such roads. One should proceed at slow speeds on an oiled road, especially at turns and curves.

LUA MAOLA AS COMMON HERE AS IN SOUTH SEAS

Most of the dogs in the Solomon Islands are called Maola. If the visitor calls out Maola he may expect to be a second Pied Piper.

"Why?" one asked of R. F. Thomson, English Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Western Pacific, who is visiting in London.

Because Maola means stomach ache, and the Solomon natives have the curious belief that if they are suffering from an ailment they can get rid of it by calling their dogs the name of the illness. Hence, most of the dogs bear the name Maola. Lua Maola, which means pain in the neck, is a name which is surprisingly prevalent.

1927 RADIO LAW WILL NOT BE TESTED IN COURT

The constitutionality of the radio law of 1927 will not be questioned in court for the present at least.

Broadcasting station owners who previously had announced they would take the matter to the court unless a better wave length assignment were given them by the Federal Radio Commission have withdrawn or announced they would withdraw such action.

It is anticipated that a number of stations will appeal to the District Court of Appeals over decisions of the Radio Commission, but it is not expected that the law itself will be subjected to a test as to its constitutionality.

According to government officials, owners of radio stations have concluded that another breakdown in regulation would work almost irreparable damage to the industry and that present conditions, bad as they are, are preferable to another era of complete chaos.

BRITON TO PEDAL WAY ACROSS ATLANTIC IN TINY "SUBMARINE"

In a tiny, submarine-like steel vessel of his own construction, built during his spare time, William Oldham, of Warrington, Lancashire, proposes to set out shortly on an adventurous

voyage from Dover to New York. The boat, which is only 12 feet long, with a beam of 3 feet, will be propelled by a navigator with a pedal mechanism much like bicycles operating the two-bladed propeller.

A "windmill" geared to the shaft will relieve him when the wind is fair. Two persons can be accommodated, although there won't be full length sleeping quarters. There are six water-tight compartments and four gun metal windows. Oldham will be able to button himself down when the weather is bad and keep a lookout from a small "conning tower." He has estimated that the trip will occupy forty days, and he is desirous of finding some one to share the hazards with him.

HAWK SHOCKS LOWER BROADWAY

Enter a new menace—Accipiter Fuscus, the hawk.

Not so spectacular from a police standpoint perhaps as stranglers, wire twisters and ex-murderers, hawk on its initial appearance recently attracted a crowd of nearly 1,000 persons in front of the New York Produce Exchange at Broadway and Beaver Street.

Soaring in wide circles above the building the hawk suddenly swooped down and carried off one of the hundreds of pigeons which make their homes in the skylight above the trading floor. The commotion among the pigeons was hardly greater than that among the persons below. Crowds gathered, pointing upward, and within fifteen minutes the hawk was back, soaring gracefully and high above the building. So large was the visitor that several of the onlookers, deceived by the distance, pointed it out as an airplane.

GIRL, 4, ASTOUNDS MUSICIANS WITH "ADULT" PIANO PLAYING

A four-year-old child, Dorothy Johnson, whose mother, Mrs. Florence Johnson, recently brought her here from Honolulu for a musical education, has astounded the teachers of the Chicago Musical College.

While a class of mature students gathered for a scholarship competition with the judges behind a curtain, Little Dorothy began playing Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Then followed Bach's "Prelude in C Major" without the judges being aware that any but a mature pianist was at the instrument.

When the prizes were awarded, one of the winners—little Dorothy—was not present. She was summoned.

"It is the most remarkable case of imitative talent I ever knew in my career."

So said Mossaiye Boguslawski, the pianist, one of the judges.

Dorothy's mother is a music teacher but had given her daughter little instruction and said the child simply picked up the compositions, about thirty in number, by hearing them. The little prodigy plays better than many advanced students, Boguslawski said.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

MAKE CEILING ATTRACTIVE

We decorate the four sides of our rooms with colorful papers, paints and fabrics. We put care and thought into the selection of our rugs, but we never cast a single idea toward the ceiling! Why shouldn't the ceiling be attractive?

DRINKING FOUNTAINS FOR DOGS

Three little fountains, copies of the famous Benvenuto Cellini fountain at Florence, have been installed in the marble courtyard of the Savoy Hotel to serve as drinking fountains for the pets of the guests.

NEW CONEY ISLAND IN ENGLAND TO HAVE GONDOLAS AND CANALS

If curious folks are in the region of Hampton Court Palace while in England this summer they will see gondolas cruising amid the same haunts which the Tudor courtiers frequented in the days of Henry VIII. A miniature Venice, with canals and a fleet of gondolas for hire on the taxi system, is rapidly being constructed opposite the famous palace, at a cost of £500,000. According to Colonel Henry Day, M.P., who is head of the syndicate, it will be "a regular Coney Island."

CREDITS MARATHON CRAWL TO SCOTCH CRAB

The longest sidestep on record was reported recently from a port in Dunbartonshire, Scotland, where a crab was found with a label saying that it had been released in Aberdeen eighteen months ago. If the label is authentic, the crab, which measures eight inches across, has crawled several hundred miles around the northwest coast of Scotland. Experts, however, are skeptical, pointing out that the crustaceans change their shells every year, and that therefore it would be impossible for a label to adhere to the crab for eighteen months.

TELEPHONES ARE BANNED BY ENGLISH LANDLORD

Has a landlord the right to prevent his tenants from having telephones? This unexpected question has been brought to a showdown here as a result of a challenge flung down by Mrs. Catherine Kent, a Kensington property owner, who has ordered the telephones disconnected in the block of apartments whereof she is landlord.

The instructions have been acted on by the postoffice authorities, who point out that their agreement provides that permission by the owner must be obtained for provision of maintenance of the circuit. The tenants who claim the telephone is essential to their business are taking legal advice with a view to a restoration of facilities.

ORDER CLOSING PICCADILLY JOLTS LONDON

A "bombshell" burst in the West End of London recently when Sir Henry Maybury, Director General of Roads, announced that the whole corner would be closed to traffic for four months from the end of July while a new roadway, reservoirs and a new water main are laid. The work will be done section by section, parts of the

thoroughfare being entirely closed. With the consent of the King traffic for the first time in the history of London will be diverted through Constitution Hill and the Mall past Buckingham Palace. The announcement came as a complete surprise to hotel proprietors, shopkeepers and the clubs in the world-famed thoroughfare.

BARS GAMBLING FOR CHARITY

District Attorney Elvin N. Edwards called the police chiefs of Nassau County, L. I., into conference and told them that if they did not enforce the laws against gambling he would present them to the grand jury for failing to do their duty.

Mr. Edwards said that he referred particularly to bazaars and carnivals conducted by fraternal and church organizations, where games of chance, such as wheels of fortune and raffles, are operated. He cited the case of a recent Elks carnival at Lynbrook, where Sheriff William R. Stropson confiscated a wheel of fortune valued at \$900. Since then, he said, a committee of Elks had visited him and told him there would be no more gambling at their club.

LARD SUBSTITUTE IN SCIENCE MYSTERY

How catalysts, as a part of an unsolved mystery of the world of science, have made possible the annual production of millions of pounds of lard substitute was one of the disclosures today in the Institute of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society. Hard fats from oils was but one of the many examples cited when the chemical process known as catalysis drew attention from one of the largest and most distinguished audiences since the institute opened.

A catalyst was described by Dr. Hugh S. Taylor, of Princeton University, as "a material which profoundly affects the rate of chemical reaction between other materials without being changed itself."

It was likened to promoters of baseball teams or prizefights who bring opponents together "so that they might get into action," or to "chemical persons," marrying atoms of different substances to make a unit.

Several explanations of this chemical mystery were offered. One of the theories was that expressed by Dr. Eric K. Rideal, of Cambridge University, England.

"Catalysis seems to be an electrical effect," he said, "and it apparently involves the attraction of the catalytic surface for molecules of the reacting materials." Dr. Rideal said that catalytic reactions were of so many different types that no general theory to fit all conditions was yet possible.

Establishment of a single university fitted to do all of the catalytic research work could supply knowledge which would save the industries and the nations millions of dollars, in the opinion of Dr. Taylor, who added that continued research was necessary "for there is so much that is unknown about this work."

Dr. Irving Langmuir, director of the research laboratories of the General Electric Company, was another speaker on the subject of catalysis.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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